

faith

May and June 2010
Volume 42 Number 3
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OF FAITH AND REASON

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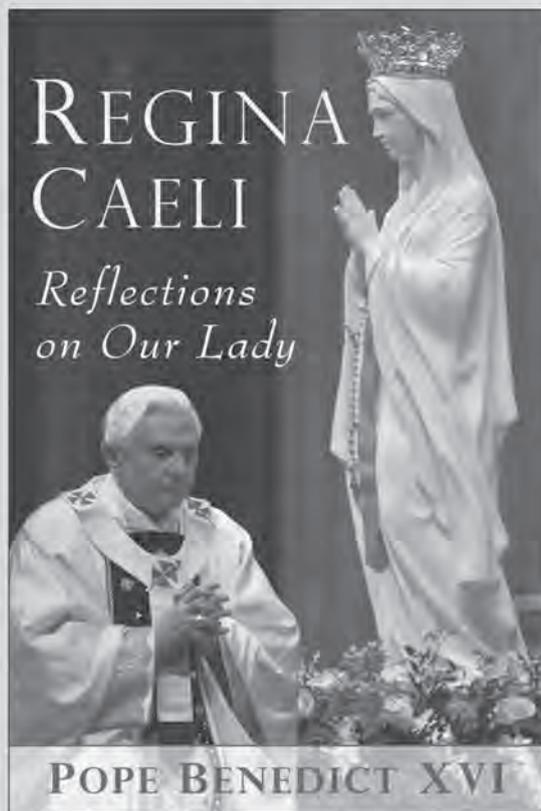
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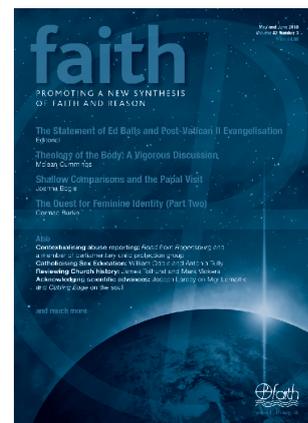
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Editor Hugh MacKenzie, St. Mary Magdalen's, Clergy House, Peter Avenue, Willesden Green, London NW10 2DD, Tel 020 8451 6720, editor@faith.org.uk

Editorial Board David Barrett, Kevin Douglas, Timothy Finigan, Andrea Fraile, Roger Nesbitt, Christina Read, Dominic Rolls, Luiz Ruscillo, Mark Vickers.

Book Reviews William Massie, St Peter's Rectory, Castle Rd, Scarborough YO11 1TH, reviews@faith.org.uk

Advertising Manager Scott Deeley, Holy Cross, 11 Bangholm Loan, Edinburgh EH5 3AH, advertising@faith.org.uk

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May and June 2010
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Towards a New Heart and Mind

Editorial Introduction

As anyone with the most rudimentary grasp of ecclesiastical history knows the Church often takes time to stabilise after a major Ecumenical Council. However the tensions of the post-conciliar period in which we find ourselves today are so acute as to constitute a crisis. The Second Vatican Council called for renewal, but it is increasingly clear that this has been significantly held back in the West.

The international sex abuse crisis has involved revelations of the deep wounding of innocent children and their families by the sinful actions of individual priests and religious, sometimes enabled by the, at best, incompetence and, at worst, callous dereliction of duty of some members of the Church's hierarchy. It clearly throws into sharp relief the perennial need within the universal Church for development in care, formation, transparency and vision. The British sex education crisis, which we describe in our editorial, is of a different yet related nature and has some analogous messages for the British Church.

Without apportioning blame here, we would note that both crises are involving the further cultural advance of the "permissive" vision of sex and love and the further marginalisation of the only realistic alternative, the Catholic vision.

Our editorial and William Oddie's column argue that in the *education* crisis our permissive Government has achieved a significantly new degree of Church co-operation. This is notwithstanding the Government's dropping of the offending clauses in order to get the bill through before the General Election. Our Road from Regensburg column and lead letter show how in the *abuse* crisis the permissive media have thrown their significant cultural power behind the idea that there is an intrinsic link between the phenomenon of priestly abuse and the nature of the Church.

The education negotiations have made very clear the British Church's policy of close cooperation with the establishment. The abuse "reporting" has made very clear the profound anti-Catholicism of this same establishment. British democratic institutions are in many ways positive influences upon society. But it should be clear now that whatever good speaking terms we might be on with the British government and media, they are on the whole not interested in anything less than the complete discrediting of the Catholic Church's claims to divine authority. The leaked foreign office memo ridiculing the Pope and Catholic teaching in April seems to be further confirmation of this. In fact, as David Quinn puts it in his 23rd April *Irish Independent* reflection upon the Pope's vilification, anglophone opinion formers seem increasingly motivated by the truth, "damage or co-opt the church [...] and] you go a long way towards destroying opposition" to the permissive project. Our current *Road from Regensburg* reinforces this point in the light of the Pope's own recent challenges to this project.

Such unmasking of anti-life dynamics, which have had a profound impact outside and even inside the Church in recent decades, might help to set the scene for a new ecclesial ethos.

The increasingly manifest sins of priests calls us to a new humility. The increasingly manifest ambivalence of post-Christian social, political, economic and journalistic institutions can lead us to a greater confidence in our vision. We may be being prepared for an even more desperately needed evangelisation.

In the end we do bear quite some responsibility for the fact that vitriol is being thrown at us. We should have been shining examples of protecting and forming the young, in our personal care, but also in our cultural influence. Our culture was once, not long ago, Christian. We are where we are because western Christianity has relinquished its social and moral influence to those of a different, reactionary persuasion. Ireland and its media is a particularly clear case in point. This is not a totally negative phenomenon. Yet since the challenge of Francis Bacon's new philosophy of science we have largely failed, in our witness and our words, to discern, let alone to check, the inexorable cultural development of attitudes profoundly hostile to Christian values.

Realistically we must acknowledge that the abuse crisis and its media spin will lead to a further weakening of the Church's credibility. This means that the ascendant permissiveness is

likely to get worse, dragging our world deeper into the mire. (See our overview of the recent "Sexualisation of Youth" survey on page 8).

But, as our culture continues to disintegrate the vacuity of its agenda and the need to turn back to God will become ever more obvious; if the

Church has responded with deep, sincere and thoughtful repentance to the sex abuse crisis it will be with a compelling new humility, with less apparent self-righteousness and evasiveness, that Catholicism will be able to offer the truth which sets us free. Our gratitude that God has preserved us, as He will, and given this saving truth, as He has, will surely grow. We should, then, also trust Him, especially in this providential Year of the Priest, to give us a fresh, rationally justifiable, confidence that Christ is indeed still teaching and sanctifying in His Church. (In this issue Frs Cummings and Burke, and our Truth Will Set You Free column, elucidate necessary aspects of this process concerning the clearly central issue of the relationship of sex and love.)

At their Low Week meeting the Bishops of England and Wales have wisely and humbly suggested that we use our May Fridays to offer prayer and penance "for healing, forgiveness and renewed dedication". This reflects that mandated by Pope Benedict for our cousins across the water. The Bishops' statement supported his "wise and courageous leadership".

True renewal does indeed start in our own hearts. As our Road from Regensburg column brings out the Pope implies that we should all have the humility to revisit the sources of revelation, natural and supernatural, and examine our consciences for ways we might have eased the post-Vatican II turmoil. This is the only true foundation for saving broken Britain.

"The need to turn back to God will become ever more obvious."

The Statement of Ed Balls and Post-Vatican II Evangelisation *Editorial*

Matthew 5:15 “Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.”

In *The Spectator's* debate on 2 March, in which the motion was “England should be a Catholic country again”, Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor struck a paternal note in his summing up of the evening. He argued that a Britain that was Catholic again would be able to offer the “genius” of our national character to the wider Church, thereby “enriching” it. It was an appropriate conclusion to a genial evening in which the Catholic side, while largely failing to engage directly with opposing arguments, presented its vision much more coherently than in the Intelligence Squared debate of last November.

The policy adopted since Vatican II by the bishops of England and Wales of fostering an “English Catholicism” was especially developed under Cardinal Hume's leadership, and it has much going for it. But rumbling in the background since late February has been a crisis in the Church which suggests that our searching for an accommodation with contemporary British culture may have seriously over-reached itself.

It concerns the ambiguity of the Church's response to the Government's proposed strategy for sex and relationships education (SRE) and teenage pregnancy. This strategy is profoundly hostile to the Catholic vision of love; nonetheless the ambiguity of the response made by the Church's official representatives has fostered the impression that the Church supports the Government's proposals, and fostered confusion over the content of relevant Church teaching.

It is symptomatic of a way of engaging with the political process that is deeper rooted than the particular propensities of our current ecclesial leadership. This point applies to the leadership of the Catholic Education Service (CES), to which we must make reference below. The crisis is caused by an ecclesial culture that has built up in recent decades and has roots going a lot further back.

Proclamation and Politics

The Church is in the world but not of the world. This entails a certain balance between the politics of careful negotiation and a clear proclamation of principle. February's bout of anti-family legislation prompted examples of both types of engagement with the world, each apparently achieving something. Both the painstaking and polite lobbying of the CES on the Children, Schools and Families Bill and Pope Benedict's “interfering” *ad limina* proclamation that the Equality Bill was “against the natural law” seem to have induced the Government, to some degree, to change clauses in its legislation in a way that is more acceptable to Catholic moral teaching. So, even on the purely human level, the argument that negotiation alone is more likely to produce results than the proclamation of principles is clearly not always true.

Arguments of expediency aside, the underlying issue is that the Magisterial power to pronounce authoritatively on matters of faith and – in this case more especially – morals is intrinsic to the purpose of the Church. Thus, for the good of the world, this must always have a certain precedence over the polite give and take of dialogue. Magisterium does not preclude the place of the latter but provides the foundational dynamic and vision out of which we should dialogue.

The fact that there has been a swing away from this emphasis, even to the point of positing a dichotomy between politics and proclamation, is apparent in the way the CES has attempted to defend its role in the SRE crisis. In an address to Catholic school leaders on 28 January this year, which appeared in the news section of the CES website in mid-March, Oona Stannard said the agency believes “in the importance of being seen and heard through dialogue rather than remote pronouncements that may have less impact”. In a letter to concerned parents, published on Catholic blogs, Bishop McMahon, head of the CES, put the policy succinctly: “The CES considers that it gets the best results for the

Definition of Formal Cooperation with Evil

Formal cooperation occurs when a person or organisation freely participates in the action(s) of a principal agent, or shares in the agent's intention, either for its own sake or as a means to some other goal. Implicit formal cooperation occurs when, even though the cooperator denies intending the object of the principal agent, the cooperating person or organisation participates in the action directly and in such a way that it could not be done without this participation. Formal cooperation in intrinsically evil actions, either explicitly or implicitly, is morally illicit.

Ascension Health: Largest US Catholic Healthcare organisation.

Acronyms

DCSF: The Government's Department for Children, Schools and Families. Secretary of State: Ed Balls; parliamentary under-secretary: Baroness Morgan.

SRE: Sex and relationships education, in the context of schools. It is part of PSHE (physical, social and health education) and is set to become statutory in state-funded schools.

CES: The Catholic Education Service. Head: Bishop Malcom McMahon; director: Oona Stannard.

WES: The education service for the archdiocese of Westminster.

The Statement of Ed Balls and Post-Vatican II Evangelisation

continued

Catholic community by negotiation.” He added that “confrontation with the Government over this Bill would not achieve anything”.

The playing out of this particular engagement of Church and world is the clearest evidence yet that the balance has gone far too far in favour of political dialogue. It has become manifest that we need a more coherent synthesis of worldly knowledge and revealed wisdom. This should renew our appreciation of the Magisterium of the Church as a living, personal, divine authority capable of definitively true statements. This voice is necessary for the fruitfulness of our giving “unto Caesar what is Caesar’s”. Without it, we will find it much harder, even impossible, to discern when reasonable compromise in the political arena risks transmuting into a profoundly unwise compromise of our proclamation of Christ and, to take the case in point, of the virtue of purity. Unless we hear Christ’s challenge “But I say to you” in both our private lives and the public forum, our convictions may falter and we may find ourselves driven by fear of what we stand to lose rather than inspired by faith in Christ.

A Moment of Truth?

Historians will surely view post-Christian Europe as an extraordinary cultural mix of social development and demographic death, a culture which can both espouse living life to the full and at the same time deny its value and destroy it. This is the reason for the anguish of Catholic immigrants, lured over here by our great advances, who find, after just one generation, that their children are speaking a different language and living a very different life.

At 8:18am on Tuesday 23 February 2010, a week before Cardinal Murphy-O’Connor debated the virtues of a Catholic England, something happened that may well come to be seen by such historians as an epiphany moment, revealing with telling clarity the contemporary British Church’s propensity to get unwillingly sucked into an agenda profoundly at variance with our own.

Ed Balls, the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, was being vigorously interviewed on Radio 4’s *Today* programme. In this prime time slot, with a large majority of the programme’s six million listeners tuned

in, Mr Balls said that Catholic schools “must explain *how* to access an abortion; the same is true on contraception as well” [our emphasis]. He added: “To have the support of the Catholic Church and Archbishop Nichol [sic] in these changes is, I think, very, very important, is a huge step forward.”

We should note at this point that for a school to provide information enabling sexually active pupils “to access” abortion and contraception is, according to Catholic teaching, “formal cooperation” with the grave evils of, respectively, murder and sex outside marriage. This traditional Christian teaching is in some ways the source of the principle enshrined in Western legal systems that those who “aid, abet, counsel, or procure” that which is wrong are as liable to prosecution “as a principal offender”.

“In the midst of this confusion our representatives continue to prefer to affirm that ‘Church teaching’ will be followed without clarifying what it actually is.”

Paragraph 2272 of the Catechism states: “Formal co-operation in an abortion constitutes a grave offence. [... The Church] makes clear the gravity of the crime committed, the irreparable harm done to the innocent who is put to death, as well as to the parents and the whole of society.”

Thus Mr Balls has outlined a policy that is profoundly opposed to a Catholic understanding of human nature. Not only that, but he has clearly suggested that Catholic magisterial leaders support “these changes”.

No Public Denial

Mr Balls’ statement on the *Today* programme has not, at the time of writing, been unequivocally repudiated in public by its key subject, our leaders. It seems that this might class as one of the biggest moral and political sacrifices we have ever made. For it looks as if our Church allowed the DCSF gracefully and quietly to make what seems like an implicit partial retraction 13 days later in the House of Lords. The Department’s parliamentary under-secretary, Baroness Morgan, pronounced that the bill “does not, for instance,

Time-Line of Relevant Public Statements

(fuller versions are in the text)

25 January

DCSF issues draft “Guidance to Schools”: SRE “should” include “range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services available”. CES director says it is “a positive step forward [... It] helps support schools”.

23 February

Ed Balls says Catholic schools “must explain how to access an abortion [... and] contraception”.

Amendment passed: nothing in the law should be “read as preventing” SRE being “taught in a way that reflects the school’s religious character”.

DCSF announces “Teenage Pregnancy Strategy: Beyond 2010”, in which “the promotion of condoms remains central”.

24 February

Ed Balls says he is “worried” that teenage pregnancy strategy has failed to meet 1998 target.

“For those involved with the Christian formation of pupils in non-faith schools the appearance of Catholic support [for the Government’s sex education programme] is especially tragic and tear-jerking.”

require Catholic schools to teach young people where to access an abortion”. The CES, though, has not publicly highlighted this pronouncement, but simply alluded to it in private letters made public on the internet by interested Catholics. For instance, Bishop Mahon mentioned that “there has been much wrong information put about by campaigning groups and indeed the Government itself. The CES has had some of this corrected”. And, in answer to a question at a clergy gathering in north-east England the Bishop said that Ed Balls got it wrong.

The CES *has* publicly said, in a letter to *The Catholic Herald* on 5 March, that Catholic schools will “not promote abortion”, but it has left it to the rest of us to discover that, late one night in the Lords, the Baroness gave legal support to this statement and directly contradicted and corrected her boss.

But to Mr Balls’ “misspeak” on abortion we must add an earlier one by Ms Stannard, which implied something very similar, and may even have led him astray. On 25 January Ms Stannard very publicly lent the support of the Catholic Church to the Government’s “positive” and “support[ive]” draft SRE “Guidance to Schools”, which clearly does require secondary schools in general to cooperate in providing information on abortion and sex before marriage.

The guidance states that “SRE should” include:

“learning how to avoid unplanned pregnancy [...] and the choices available [...] and] the range of local and national sexual health advice, contraception and support services available”.¹

Also on 23 February, the Government passed a pro-faith school amendment, partly in response to the CES lobbying mentioned above. It affirms that nothing in the law should be “read as preventing” SRE being “taught in a way that reflects the school’s religious character”. The CES and the education service of Westminster diocese (WES) have, in effect, argued that this amendment ensures that the above measures will not apply to faith schools in as much as they, in general, go against “Church teaching” (their preferred term). In terms of specifics the CES has mentioned only that Catholic schools would not “promote abortion”. On *that point*, the DCSF now agrees, it seems.

Contraception

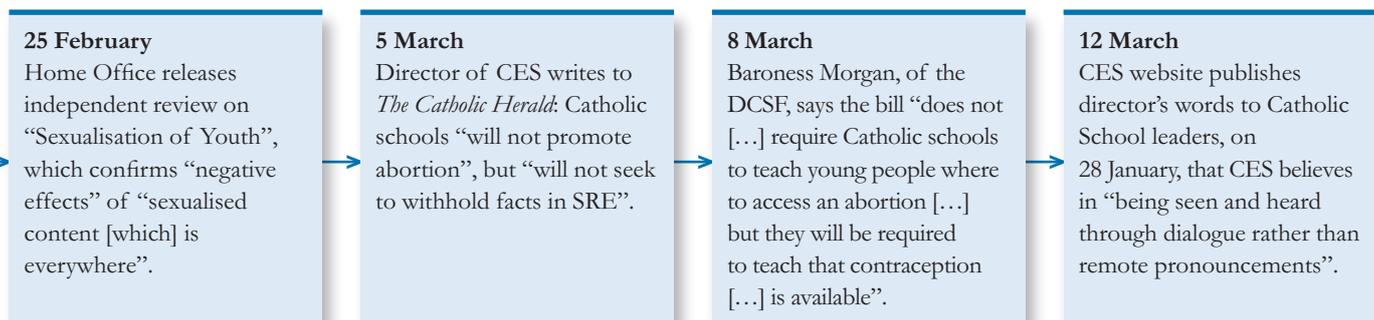
On contraception (including the “emergency” variety) the CES have been vague and even ambivalent, whilst the DCSF have been worryingly consistent.²

The Government did not retract Mr Balls’ claim on 23 February that we will be forced to enable sexually active pupils to access *contraception*, and, by implication, that we support this. There has been no rebuttal of this specific point. From the CES and WES affirmations that schools will be able legally to “act in accordance with Church teaching”, we can conclude that aiding and abetting teenage sex before marriage is not seen as a good idea – but more on that below.

But to support this interpretation there is another subtle statement which we need, it would seem, to put in the “misspeak” column. The CES letter to *The Catholic Herald* adds that Catholic schools “will not seek to withhold facts in SRE”. But “withhold” seems to be a reasonable term to describe what we will be doing if we don’t give “facts” which must, according to *all* DCSF statements on this specific issue *since* the amendment, be given by faith schools. These statements include those made on 23 February, partly retracted by Baroness Morgan with regard to abortion, but also immediately after her retraction when she says that Catholic schools “will be required to teach that contraception exists, *is available*, and to say that the Church’s point of view is not the only one” (our emphasis). It is interesting that a CES private letter to a concerned enquirer quotes the former retraction but omits that latter affirmation.

We should not be surprised at this repeated affirmation by the DCSF. This is because making sure that sexually active pupils have access to such information is a key part both of their “Guidance to Schools” and of their “Teenage Pregnancy Strategy: Beyond 2010”, announced on the same day with the words “the promotion of condoms remains central to the overall effort”.

Catholic teaching, which the CES affirms that all Catholic schools do and will follow, says we *must* “withhold” some of these facts – namely those whose provision is *aimed at* compliance with the legal requirement to enable “access” to “emergency” and other contraception.



The Statement of Ed Balls and Post-Vatican II Evangelisation continued

In the end it will be up to Ofsted inspectors and the courts to decide whether the DCSF framers of the law are right, in other words whether the facts “not withheld” must include how to access “emergency” and other forms of contraception. In the intervening months and years teachers, parents, priests and others are, presumably, meant to wait politely and not rock the boat. Maybe Paddy Power might use the time to offer us odds on the existence of Catholic schools in the period after September 2011 – and maybe on projected teenage STDs, abortions and suicides, but more on that below.

Which brings us back to Oona Stannard’s clear and public statement on 25 February that the Government’s “draft guidance is a positive step forward [... It] helps support schools in counteracting [false impressions of relationships] from within their own carefully planned SRE programmes.” We argued above that, given the CES position on the amendment, it would seem to be a “misspeak”. But there

is a deeper reason for thinking this. The law and its guidance indisputably require teachers at *non-faith* schools formally to cooperate with abortion and under-age and pre-marital sex. Official Catholic support for this is an untenable position. For those (especially parents and priests) involved with the Christian formation of these schools’ pupils, Catholic and non-Catholic, the appearance of such support is especially tragic and tear-jerking. It is the unkindest cut of all. How did we get this far?

Delicate Politics

In an article in *Zenit.org* on 11 March Edward Pentin, the Vatican correspondent for *Newsweek* magazine, contrasted the “growing opposition to the Bill” with the “absence of opposition from the bishops, which some charitably think may be tactical”. Which brings us to what Ms Stannard termed back on 28 January “the importance [...] of dialogue rather than remote pronouncements”.

The Cultural Background

Post-1960s inculturation strategy

The vision of a renewed “English Catholicism”, touched on by Cardinal Murphy-O’Connor in the debate on 2 March, has great strengths. Our very foundation in Pope Gregory’s commission to St Augustine of Canterbury encouraged a degree of respect for and development upon the rites and buildings of the “angelic” pagan Angles whom the Pope had met in Rome. Moreover, the Church has a political dimension, and in a fallen world politics are rarely clear-cut. Although the Church’s Magisterium is guided by the Holy Spirit, there is no guarantee that the prudential judgements made by those wielding authority in the Church will have a favourable outcome. The timing and manner of these judgements are open to question. We might think of the Pope’s excommunication of Elizabeth I, the Cartesian-inspired, long-term rejection of science’s impact upon metaphysics, the early 20th-century “Fortress Vatican” mentality, Pope Pius XII’s war-time pronouncements, the Dutch bishops’ condemnation of Nazism, and of course modern bishops’ dealings with those among their “sons” who have been involved in abuse.

The Second Vatican Council was concerned with our interaction with modern culture. In its opening speech Pope John XXIII affirmed beautifully that “that which most interests the Council is that the sacred deposit of Christian doctrine is safeguarded and taught in a more effective manner”. In the last quarter of the 20th century Cardinal Hume brought his attractive spirituality, as well as his significant establishment links, to this task of inculturation. It is known that he was interested in moving the Church “centre-stage” in British society, and away from the partly Irish “ghetto” of the first half of the 20th century. His achievements in the 1990s in education and prison reform, as well as his wide popularity, were seen as partial successes in this regard.³

In further support of such an approach is the fact that much in modern British culture, and indeed state education, is good. The post-Enlightenment philosophical “turn to the subject” has brought to fruition good aspects of the Christian-inspired re-discovery of the “rights of man”. The recognition of the value of each person’s experience, the focusing upon individual needs of school pupils, and the political fostering of certain rights for disabled people are encouraging examples.

The “anti-life mentality”

However, while the Church was seeking such harmonious developments another current swept across Western society in the wake of the 1960s. Pope John Paul II called it the “culture of death”. This too was spurred on by Enlightenment thinking, though its philosophical roots, we would argue, go back to the dualism at the foundations of Western civilisation. George Weigel insightfully depicts the First World War as the “trapgate” of Europe’s 20th-century “rage of self-mutilation”.

As Pope Benedict has been bringing out with increasing clarity, the associated removal of the Christian God from popular discourse is radically undermining the Western social fabric. In this context our culture’s positive values appear as parasites upon the dying Christian body politic. This was what Benedict meant when, in an address to an EU delegation, he laid the blame for this state of affairs on the modern inability to see traditional European values as “a coherent whole which is ordered and expressed historically on the basis of a precise anthropological vision”.

At break-neck speed the family is being redefined; the Freudian will to pleasure is dethroning human life as the purpose of sex and of the universe. Millions of unborn babies are just the most obvious sacrifice to the new gods of this brave new world.

“We need the conviction and confidence that such a vision can bring.”

We should note indeed that Ed Balls has a powerful lobby pressuring him to force Catholic schools to teach, for instance, that homosexuality is “natural and normal”.

Were the Church publicly to contradict Ed Balls’ implication that she is happy formally to cooperate with abortion, we might embarrass, even betray, the Government with a general election close by. Doing this might scupper the whole collaborative process, which has certainly toned down the Government’s legislation. For instance, perhaps we should consider ourselves lucky that the parental right of withdrawal from SRE will end at 15 and not 12. And no doubt getting this far has involved many man-hours of skilful and sincere negotiation.

To understand how we have come to prioritise political negotiation over our Master’s magisterial, ecclesial and apparently “remote” voice to such an extent, we need to acknowledge the radically new situation in which the Christian Church has found itself in post-Enlightenment society. Ours is a historically unique culture formed largely by Christianity, now fostering aspects of it and simultaneously unravelling others under the inspiration of new ideologies. The text of the latest DCSF bill is a great illustration. It is replete with terms emerging from the Christian emphasis upon the fundamental and unique dignity of each human person. Yet it is a good example of what Pope Benedict has called, speaking to EU representatives, “seeing great and beautiful values compete or come into conflict.” This is a difficult terrain to navigate (see “The cultural background” opposite).

A Deep-Rooted Silence

There is a moment in the development of the Church’s *realpolitik* in England and Wales, back in 1968, which seems to have been a relevant watershed. At this point, concerning controverted moral issues, political manoeuvring became a major, if not *the* major concern of the Church, and magisterial proclamation has tended to be seen as nothing more than a slightly frustrating bottom line of what can be got away with. We described this in our July 2007 editorial “Sex Education in Catholic Schools: The Deeper Issues”:

“The problem goes back to the policy of the hierarchy in response to the publication of *Humanae Vitae*. The history of this period has been documented in chapter 8 of Clifford Longley’s “The Worlock Archive”. [...] The hierarchy adopted what Longley refers to as the “English solution” (something he regards as good). He describes the effect of a carefully worded statement from the hierarchy to the clergy. The statement supported the teaching of the encyclical but proposed a measure of leniency towards priests who dissented from it. As Longley observes, the statement had consequences reaching far beyond the pastoral care of dissident theologians:

“It was a tacit acknowledgement, at least for the time being, that there was nothing to be gained by an aggressive policy of promoting the teaching of *Humanae Vitae* in the parishes. This was where the statement was

most eloquently silent. A bishop issued his carefully worded pastoral letter, and in many cases also a private letter to his priests, and then left the subject alone. After a while this silence became a difficult silence to break.’

“Nearly forty years on, it is still difficult to break the silence.”

Questionable Compromises

- In 1986 Victoria Gillick received little support from the Church when she challenged the supposed right of doctors to give contraceptives to children under the age of 16 *without* their parents’ consent. Her temporary victory produced the only drop in the teenage pregnancy and abortion rate since the Abortion Act until that claimed by the Government last February.
- Over the years CAFOD, *The Tablet* and others have, without official reprobation, dissembled concerning cooperation with the public distribution of condoms in Africa. To this day only programmes emphasising abstinence have produced sustained statistical progress.
- For many years most Catholic schools have publically supported the “Comic Relief” brand, which organisation supports abortion provision. After *The Catholic Herald* raised objections we were promised that funds charitably raised by us would not be used to provide abortions. It has not been shown that this accounting measure ensures that our public fundraising for them is not formal cooperation with their vision.
- In 2008, our London Catholic hospital, St John and St Elizabeth, leased part of its premises to a GP clinic which will be referring for abortion. The aim was to extricate the hospital from its dire financial straits. The decision was made with the knowledge of and without opposition from Church authorities (see our March 2008 article, “The secularisation of a Catholic institution”).
- Of our 11 adoption agencies, so far six, representing 10 dioceses, have dropped their Catholic affiliation. They have, no doubt with much anguish, preferred to be publicly prepared to offer children to same-sex couples, than to give up their excellent and important adoption placement work. Yet still, after all the years in which our people have given them great support, they have gone, with all their resources. Only one of the relevant ten bishops, Patrick O’Donoghue of Lancaster, publicly and vigorously opposed his agency’s decision to cooperate with the Government’s direct undermining of marriage and civilisation in this regard.
- The Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service, and its predecessor, the Catholic Office for the Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults have been rolling out some very good and important work across our dioceses. Perhaps due to the lack of a credible alternative helpline, they have encouraged the publicising of *Childline* to children throughout the English and Welsh Church with much success. *Childline* prominently promotes abortion as a reasonable option, and sex as “normal in loving relationships between couples above the age of consent”.

The Statement of Ed Balls and Post-Vatican II Evangelisation continued

The Church in this land has found itself tongue-tied and unable to offer any effective counter to the secular challenge. Cultural battle after battle, especially in the area of sexual and life ethics, has been lost almost before it has started. And the silence since 23 February is just a more extreme version of other occasions when the post-Conciliar English and Welsh Church has seemed intent on sailing close to the whirlwind of formal cooperation with the grave evils of abortion and promiscuity (see “Questionable compromises”, p.7).

Effects Upon Our Social Fabric

And so in 2010 we find ourselves with a government statement, supported by a press release quoting the CES director, that clearly implies, mistakenly it would seem, that the current position of the leadership of the Church in England and Wales is at odds with Catholic teaching. And the response of that same leadership has so far avoided clear-cut refutation. Rather it has been carefully to spin the interpretation of the law, while the Government pulls back slightly from its anti-life negotiating positions. Clear teaching has little place in this strategy.

The public propagation of falsehood is always a discordant note in the symphony of the universe with reverberations of varying strengths across creation. And a falsehood which fosters formal cooperation with seriously wrong acts does, as the Catechism says, “irreparable harm [...] to the whole of society”.

But the *appearance* of falsehood in the mouth of Christ, or the teaching of his Church, interferes with the vital pulse of salvation history. It introduces a fracture that undermines salvation and undermines hope.

The implications of Ed Balls’ high-profile statement concerning aspects of what our Church leaders are teaching are scandalous. The risk that these implications will lodge long-term in the public consciousness increases in proportion to the length of time this statement goes unanswered by those leaders.

The propagation of confusion concerning what that teaching is, we think, the deepest existential problem in this whole crisis. In the midst of this confusion our representatives continue to prefer to affirm that “Church teaching” will be followed without clarifying what it actually is.

Sexualisation of the Young

The area with which this legislation is concerned happens to be sex. It happens to be an extension of a policy that has attended, and done little to arrest, the most relentless sexualisation of young people in the history of humanity.

By some apparent twist of Government planning and/or divine providence the 48 hours after what we have termed the “epiphany” of Ed Balls *Today* interview contained several profoundly relevant signs of the times. On 25 February the Home Office published the results of an independent review entitled “Sexualisation of the Young.” This confirmed what anyone in tune with British young people, Catholic or not, knows: that their sexualisation is profoundly advanced, rapidly progressing and seriously harmful. The well-researched review is a truly sobering read (see “Sexualisation Review: Extracts” below). The review shows, among other things, that most British teenagers, Christian or not, are increasingly exposed to a barrage of pornography driven by technology and ideology.

Sexualisation Review: Extracts

The Sexualisation of Youth, by Dr Linda Papadopoulos, published 25 February 2010

6. What we are seeing now is an unprecedented rise in both the volume and the extent to which [sexualised] images are impinging on everyday life. Increasingly, too, children are being portrayed in “adultified” ways while adult women are “infantilised”. This leads to a blurring of the lines between sexual maturity and immaturity, effectively legitimising the notion that children can be related to as sexual objects.

7. Children and young people today are not only exposed to increasing amounts of hyper-sexualised images, they are also sold the idea that they have to look “sexy” and “hot”. As such they are facing pressures that children in the past simply did not have to face. [...] There is a significant amount of evidence that attests to the negative effects of sexualisation on young people in terms of mental and physical health, attitudes and beliefs.

10. When researchers examine the content of young people’s web pages they find that young teens are posting sexually explicit images of themselves on social networking sites,

and self-regulating each other with sexist, derogatory and demeaning language.

18. It is not now a case of *if* a young person will be exposed to pornography but *when*. [...] 27 per cent of [14- to 17-year-old] boys are accessing pornography every week, with 5 per cent viewing it every day. [...] 58 per cent had viewed pornography.

21. Sexualised content is everywhere and, often, children and young people are accessing it alone.

32. One in three teenage girls aged 13-17 [who had had an intimate relationship of some kind, which was 88 per cent of the whole group] had been subjected to unwanted sexual acts while in a relationship, and one in four had suffered physical violence [this was from a thorough poll conducted for the NSPCC in 2009].

Also from section 5, p.47:

Each day, search engines deal with around 68 million requests for pornographic material – approximately a quarter of all searches on the net.

“the appearance of falsehood in the mouth of Christ interferes with the vital pulse of salvation history.”

Twenty-four hours after Ed Balls' *Today* statement he was on breakfast television admitting that he was “worried” by the failure of the Government's strategy to reach its target of a 50 per cent drop in teenage pregnancies over the last 12 years.⁴

This admission came just a day after the DCSF confirmed that its fresh, new strategy is, wait for it, more of the same. *The Daily Mail* quoted Professor Brenda Almond of Hull University as commenting that “the Government continues to cling to its discredited strategy of dishing out sex advice, pills and condoms”. *The Telegraph* quoted Norman Wells of the Family Education Trust, who pointed out that the whole strategy “is making it more difficult for girls to resist the advances of their boyfriends”.

The stream of shocking anecdotes concerning sex education in non-Catholic as well as Catholic schools is wearisome confirmation of this process of sexualisation of youth by their respected, adult mentors.

The failure of the whole sexual revolution is surely confirmed by the car wreck that is the modern family, as prophesied by *Humanae Vitae*. In *The Spectator* debate Piers Paul Read made this point:

“There is much cant about protecting the rights of children but, as Pope John Paul II said, the right of a child to be brought up under one roof by its natural parents should be seen as one of the most fundamental of all human rights. And there is no doubt that it would be if children had the vote. But children do not have the vote. They have no lobby. No Stonewall. No feminist MPs.”

Pope Benedict's words to the English and Welsh Bishops on 1 February this year seem particularly timely:

“I urge you as pastors to ensure that the Church's moral teaching be always presented in its entirety and convincingly defended. [...] Continue to insist upon your right to participate in national debate through respectful dialogue with other elements in society. In doing so [...] you are actually giving voice to the convictions of many people who lack the means to express them.”

The Root of the Problem

Handing on the truth given by Christ is a central role of the Church and plays a vital role in combating the over-sexualisation of our young people. We need to strike the appropriate balance between proclaiming this truth and engaging with the political process. This entails an understanding of exactly why the Magisterium is so central to the Church, why it is right to talk of “formal cooperation” with evil as always doing “irreparable harm [...] to the whole of society” and why the Catholic vision of sex, love and, so crucially, our woundedness (see Fr Cummings' article in this issue), is the right alternative to the prevailing hedonistic humanism. We need the conviction and confidence that such a vision can bring. (An example of an integrally Catholic sex education programme for Year 6 is given in our Truth Will Set You Free column).

The British Catholic Church finds itself seemingly inextricably embroiled with the latest act of a government which is at the forefront of a hedonistically inspired offensive to redefine the family and human life; it is an onslaught that faces no clear opposition. We to whom has been committed the task of remaining resolute are instead fighting for scraps from the anti-life legislative feast of the “noughties”.

It is not that the policy developed by Cardinal Hume in the wake of Vatican II, and alluded to by Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor in the March debate, has been completely wrong. It is just that the developed vision of our traditional Faith, looked for by Vatican II, has not happened in tandem. Thus we have come to the delicate process of negotiating with a new secularism without really knowing where we want to go.

A few months before his beatification we are now staring at the fulfilment of the prophecy made 175 years ago by John Henry Newman in his *Development of Christian Doctrine*, for we have “woken up with a new world to conquer without the tools to do it”. Let us pray to him that the date 23 February 2010 may prove indeed to have been a wake-up call for the British Church to acknowledge frankly where we are now. Only with such shared self-knowledge can we plot a path forward. Only with new inspiration can we rediscover the wisdom and courage to place our lamp upon a hill top in the valley of darkness.

Notes

¹The guidance goes on to offer “questions schools could explore within SRE”.

These include, for 11- to 14-year olds, “What can I expect from contraception and sexual health services and where and when are these services available?”; and, for 15-year-olds, who must now attend SRE, “What sexual and reproductive rights do I have as a young person (including rights relating to information, healthcare, confidentiality and the law)?” – including information on “reproductive rights”.

²The DCSF initially defended Mr Balls' statement by arguing on its website that the amendment enabled us to give our “religious views” provided they were not presented “as the only *valid* ones” (our emphasis). This DCSF website explanation has been, obligingly it seems, removed. The CES does seem to have the stronger case here. Surely, at least at this stage of our decaying culture, a court would not uphold the Government's attempted imposition of pure relativism upon religious teaching, though we are not far away from the time when it might.

The introduction to the draft guidance states that “while remaining sensitive to the ethos of the school, it is vital that all young people have information about contraception”. On 18 February, before the tabling of the amendment, Ed Balls used St Thomas More Catholic school in Bedford as an exemplar of the situation which he was still outlining after the amendment. Apparently the school “fully” informs “sexually active” young people on how “to protect themselves from pregnancy and STIs” including providing “details of local services”. The school itself has, understandably, taken more than a leaf out of the CES's book – it has not directly denied one iota of the Government's statement, but simply issued a statement, on 23 February, virtually cut and pasted from the CES website, stating that it is “placing [SRE] in the context of the Catholic faith [...] resting on the profound respect found in the Catholic faith for the sanctity of all human life”.

³On the day of the announcement of Vincent Nichols' elevation to Westminster the Editor of this magazine was in a radio discussion with John Wilkins, former editor of *The Tablet*, a journal well respected in Church establishment circles. Wilkins expressed a certain fear that Nichols might move us away from being “centre-stage” in British society, and that if he were too critical of aspects of modern society the British people, who have a great tradition of tolerance, might just “shrug their shoulders”.

⁴The £246 million spent had, it was claimed, reduced the number of 15- to 17-year-old girls getting pregnant to four in every 100 in 2008, a 13 per cent drop from 1998. Of course, this does not take into account the abortifacient effects of “contraceptive” pills, especially of the “emergency” variety, increasing access to which is so key to the sex education which the Government has sponsored for decades and now wants to impose. Professor David Paton of Nottingham University was quoted in *The Daily Mail* as saying the drop “may have been due to population change”: the 2009 NSPCC study mentioned in the sexualisation review, for instance, showed that Asian immigrant teenagers were significantly less sexually active than other groups.

Theology of the Body: A Vigorous Discussion *by McClean Cummings*

Fr Cummings overviews a recent prominent controversy in US moral theology. It has implications for the harmonising of Catholic tradition with the Theology of the Body. Fr Cummings is an associate pastor in Ellicott City, in the diocese of Baltimore, Maryland. He is also involved with formation at Mount Saint Mary's seminary in Emmitsburg.

Christopher West is a truly American theologian. He doesn't just present Catholic teaching articulately and intelligently. Rather, he markets it. West is a showman, a salesman, a man with a flair for populism. Thanks to his contagious enthusiasm and entrepreneurial talent, he is forming a veritable movement out of John Paul II's insights into human sexuality and the conjugal life. Among many young and faithful Catholics West has now attained pop star status. Moreover, he enjoys the support of respected members of the hierarchy, who sit on the board of his Theology of the Body Institute and recommend his books. Recently, even the secular media began to take notice of Christopher West's accomplishments. An interview with ABC's *Nightline* back in May of last year seemed likely to raise another milestone on West's upward trajectory. Such, however, was not the case.

Immediately following the airing of the interview, West posted a note of caution on his website warning that ABC had edited and presented the interview in a sensationalist manner. In particular, comments made by West about Hugh Hefner, the founder of *Playboy* magazine, had been turned into a major theme. It was the perfect "angle" to attract viewers' attention: a Catholic theologian who spoke sympathetically of the man who, perhaps more than any other individual, had opened the door of mainstream culture to pornography. Despite West's renown and his attempt to head off criticism, reproaches soon followed. The most notable of the early criticisms came from Alice von Hildebrand, widow of the great ethical thinker, Dietrich von Hildebrand. A professor and lecturer in her own right, Alice von Hildebrand has built upon her husband's work, especially in conjugal and gender issues. With the stature of *grande dame* in this area, her vigorous criticism of West was bound to draw notice. Despite the unstructured form of an interview, several points were made beyond the issue of Hefner, "the mere mention" of whom was deemed "an abomination." Dr von Hildebrand accused West of a lack of reverence – of vulgarity, even, of a dangerous naiveté regarding the reality of concupiscence, and of failing to discuss adequately the ascetic and spiritual work needed to attain holiness.

Other thinkers expressed reservations about the *Nightline* piece, including Mary Shivanandan and Fr José Granados, both noted Catholic theologians and authors.¹ Nonetheless, it seemed that the feathers ruffled by West's interview might soon be smoothed back into place and the bad impression chalked up to poor word choice and unfavourable editing. However, at just that moment David Schindler poured oil over the embers.² As the Provost/Dean of the Pontifical

Institute of Marriage and Family in Washington, DC, Schindler's position gives him the highest pulpit from which to address these matters. Moreover, drawing upon his familiarity with West from the time he taught him in class, Schindler did not object to the *Nightline* interview alone but took it as an occasion to comment on West generally. Finally, he presented a structured, if brief, essay with substantive criticisms under four headings. Now it was clear that a full blown controversy had emerged, and other prominent thinkers joined the fray.

David Schindler Weighs In

Before summarising Schindler's remarks, it should be noted, as Schindler himself does, that West's critics do not reject the vast bulk of his excellent work. They openly admit his ardent desire to present faithfully and integrally the teaching of the Church. Moreover, they admire and wish to protect the abundant good fruit that his work has borne. Thanks to West, many people are coming to conversion, healing and the pursuit of genuine conjugal chastity. Still, good intentions and good results cannot ensure that the message and method are problem free. Precisely because Christopher West is so influential, it is essential that problems – even if relatively small ones – do not get overlooked.

"Small", perhaps, relative to the heterodox opinions of revisionist theologians, but still big enough to cause real concern for David Schindler. "West's work seems to me to misrepresent in significant ways the thought of John Paul II," writes the professor of his former student. After listing a number of examples drawn from a variety of sources, he says that they "indicate a disordered approach to human sexuality". These are serious charges indeed. Schindler's first of four points reprises Hildebrand's main complaint: a misunderstanding of the nature and depth of concupiscence. Insisting on Christ's power to transform us, West downplays, in Schindler's view, the objective wound that remains in our fallen yet redeemed human nature. Another of West's critics, James Likoudis, proffered a quotation from the noted French theologian and Christian humanist Jean Mouroux, which seems to encapsulate the point: "Even for [married couples aided by sanctifying grace], it must be said that the body is redeemed in hope alone, that is to say, it remains unsubmitive, a trial, a temptation, and under one of its aspects the wound of a rebellious concupiscence inflicted by original sin is always open."³

The second criticism of West made by Professor Schindler concerns an inadequate notion of analogy. Failing to grasp

“West tends, according to Schindler, to reduce all love and even the Christian mysteries to sex.”

adequately “the radical discontinuity (*maior dissimilitudo*) between the divine love revealed by God – and indeed the (supernatural) love to which we are called – and sexual love or intercourse,” West tends, according to Schindler, to reduce all love and even the Christian mysteries to sex. Fr Granados, a colleague of Schindler, seems to be alluding to the same problem in his short statement on the *Nightline* interview. There he remarks that “the Pope’s proposal is not just about sexuality,” and warns that the tendency to view all through the lens of sexuality will lead to “a different kind of pansexualism, ... which in the end promotes a similar obsession with sex, even if ‘holy’.”⁴

Schindler’s third objection again echoes the reaction of Hildebrand: a lack of reverence for the sensitive nature of the topic. Schindler sees West as approaching modesty from a perspective of “maleness,” by which it appears as a necessity only for those not fully transformed by grace. “If we could just get over our prudishness and sin-induced guilt, [West] seems to think, we would be ready simply to dispense with clothes and look at others in their nakedness.” Schindler claims that the interior dimension of modesty and a Marian approach to the subject is ignored.

Finally, in his fourth point, Schindler warns that West’s forceful and confident “style” of speaking may indicate something also about the content. Schindler wonders whether his younger counterpart is sufficiently open to self-questioning. Rather, convinced of his “charism,” West tends, according to Schindler, to instil in some members of his audience “a sense of guilt, of resistance to the Holy Spirit, if they experience uneasiness about what he is saying.”

Janet Smith Responds

Not surprisingly, such a barrage from the redoubtable Schindler caused West to hunker down. He did not make a public reply for five months, awaiting a word of support from his local bishops, Cardinal Justin Rigali and Bishop Kevin Rhoades.⁵ In the meantime, two well-known professors, Janet Smith and Michael Waldstein, rallied round. Dr Smith, a professor of ethics at Sacred Heart Seminary in Detroit, is also a popular speaker and writer on issues relating to sex and marriage. Her first response to Schindler⁶ is largely concerned with chiding him for issuing a critique of West at the time and in the manner that he did. She is concerned that the use of an internet blog (that of the Knights of Columbus) to discuss a high-level academic controversy could easily cause harm to West’s good name and fruitful work. For those not familiar with academic debates, the impression could be given that West’s work contains serious errors, when, in fact, his books have received imprimaturs and the endorsement of trusted figures. Furthermore, she argues that a brief posting on a blog does not provide the space needed for fairness to West. Schindler’s posting does not include context for the examples of West’s allegedly dubious tendencies, nor does Schindler make a sustained

argument to prove his points. Finally, she closes her defence of West with what amounts to a straightforward denial of Schindler’s fourth point, saying, “[West] has shown spectacular docility and humility in reworking [his presentations] in response to criticisms.”

Michael Waldstein’s response to Schindler raised the tension of the discussion a few degrees. Waldstein, a professor at Ave Maria University, recently published a new translation of Pope John Paul II’s famous Wednesday audiences with the help of Christopher West. Like Smith, Waldstein faults Schindler for failing to provide sufficient evidence and context for his “sweeping, massive accusations.” Unlike Smith, Waldstein alleges that Schindler is basing his remarks on the spin of the *Nightline* piece, not on West’s published works, which he calls “an act of injustice.” This point will be easily refuted by Schindler who hardly mentioned the *Nightline* interview. Most of Professor Waldstein’s short contribution, however, seeks to defend West’s understanding of concupiscence, which has now emerged as the key issue.

The following week, David Schindler responded to the criticisms of Smith and Waldstein in one article posted on the same Knights of Columbus blog, *Headline Bistro*.⁷ Without further escalating the temperature of the argument, Schindler defended himself ably in regard to the methodological considerations. In any case, the prudence or propriety of his approach is not of primary interest compared with the validity of his claims. To bolster these, he develops somewhat the argumentation behind his three main criticisms: the notion of concupiscence, the inadequate use of analogy, and the lack of a Marian dimension. Most notable is his treatment of concupiscence in which he points out that the difficulty in assessing West’s position is that the perceived problem is not one of definitions but of emphasis. “Understanding [Waldstein’s fine summary of teaching on concupiscence] in an appropriately Catholic way depends entirely on qualifying properly the sense in which true growth in virtue – under the transforming power of grace – *does overcome* the tendency to sin, *relative to ‘objective concupiscence and the consequent danger to sin’.*” Still, Schindler does mention three specific aspects of the question that he believes West needs to address. Acknowledging that the discussion is getting technical, Schindler closes by inviting all to patient reflection and Christopher West to write an article in *Communio*, the academic journal edited by Schindler.

Replies from Smith and Waldstein to Schindler’s second posting left the truce called for by Schindler in place.⁸ Only one point calls for a fuller discussion. Schindler concluded his section on concupiscence with the observation: “Needless to say, ambiguity on the three points noted here can quickly slide one toward a dangerous imprudence in matters of sexuality.” A prime example of what Schindler would consider dangerous imprudence seems to be the refusal by West to rule out as immoral the *initiation* of

Theology of the Body: A Vigorous Discussion continued

unnatural acts provided that they are intended as preparatory for normal intercourse. Like Hildebrand, Schindler eschews discussion of this matter because “some things just ought not to be talked about in a public setting, on the grounds not of prudishness but of simple human decorum and respect for others.”

While endeavoring to respect this reserve, we can perhaps draw an instructive element from Janet Smith’s attempt to defend West on the point. She returns to the Manualist tradition, as does Dr Michael Healy of Steubenville University in his defense of West’s permission of the same practice.⁹ Claiming that “the writers of moral manuals used to train seminarians for about 150 years have defended [the practice],” Smith gives the impression of a unanimous approval by pre-Conciliar moral theology. In fact, what is presented as common acceptance would better be described as a general failure to condemn. The Manualist tradition was burdened by two related problems: the residue of probabilism, which resisted proscribing a behaviour as long as some authority allowed it, and legalism, which sought to increase freedom by allowing anything not falling strictly under the definition of a sin. The renewal of moral theology now under way, thanks to an emphasis on virtue and a personalist perspective, has been attempting to overcome the mentality of moral minimalism that had developed over the last several centuries. Both Smith and West know this and explicitly reject moral minimalism. The question, then, remains: why does Dr Smith have to go back to these dusty tomes to find support for West? A practice that is so clearly contrary to the virtue of chastity, personalism and the language of the body should be emphatically rejected by West (as it is by Smith herself), not tentatively discouraged. At the very least, ambivalence on the point should be clearly distinguished from the teaching of John Paul II.

Beyond Christopher West

Before turning to Christopher West’s own long-awaited comments on these matters, we should highlight one point of great significance made by Schindler in his first essay. Here Schindler asserts that this controversy is, in fact, not so much about West at all; it is about an interpretation of the late Pontiff’s thought found in many exponents of theology of the body. Writes Schindler: “In sum, West’s work provides a paradigm of what is most often criticised today in connection with John Paul II’s theology of the body – and rightly criticised, insofar as that theology is identified with West’s interpretation: namely, that it is too much about sex and too romantic.” This comment shows how secondary are the quibbles about the context of West’s apparently strange remarks and the prudence of Schindler arguing on blogs. The real question is much greater: is there a tendency in some proponents of the great Pope’s theology to take it as an invitation to focus on sexuality and especially on its romantic and pleasurable aspects to an inordinate degree? This would certainly mean that the enthusiastic reception of what can go under the

rubric of “theology of the body” would need to be carefully evaluated.

“Take, for example, the book, *Holy Sex*, by Gregory Popcak. This book is endorsed not only by West and Smith but by a variety of reliable Catholic authors. Nonetheless, constructive criticism, which seeks not to crush the efforts of this well-intentioned and generally correct author, is certainly due. Consider the following statement made by Popcak in the book: “Rather than suggesting that pleasure is bad, official church teaching insists that both husband and wife have a *right* to expect the heights of pleasure from their sexual relationship.”¹⁰ A “right”? The “heights”? Contrast this with the genuine church teaching of Pius XII: “This anti-Christian hedonism ... promotes the desire to render always more intense the pleasure in the preparation and actualisation of the conjugal union, as if in matrimonial relations the whole moral law could be reduced to the regular accomplishment of the act itself, and as if all the rest, in whatever manner done, remains justified by the effusion of mutual affection, sanctified by the sacrament of marriage...”¹¹ In fact, it would be hard to distinguish Popcak’s “One Rule for Infallible Lovers” from the kind of reduction described by the Pope. Popcak writes: “Practically speaking, ... a couple may do whatever they wish as long as both feel loved and respected and the marital act ends with the man climaxing inside the woman. That’s it. That’s the only rule, the One Rule. Everything else is left to the couple’s prudential judgment.”¹² It seems that efforts to simplify and popularise the view of the Church can easily slide into moral minimalism.

Many commentators have noted that the front line proponents of theology of the body deserve a break. Indeed, it is difficult to simplify without reducing, and to popularise without vulgarising. Moreover, the pervasive degradation of morals and sensibilities may call for a new method of evangelisation that many dislike. Schindler’s contrary opinion, however, bears serious consideration: “My own view is that the habit of communication of the dominant culture, which knows no discreet activities that ought not to be fully exposed, and no mysteries that ought not to be fully unveiled, is precisely what needs to be called into question, by both the form and the content of an authentically Christian-human response.”

What Sort of Liberation?

It is fitting to conclude our résumé of this controversy with Christopher West’s own statement.¹³ Few comments have come out after it, indicating that a welcome period of patient reflection has indeed arrived.

The bulk of West’s response, which does not mention Schindler by name, speaks to his main criticism: that West underestimates the real power of concupiscence. West chooses to reply to this point because he considers the issue of concupiscence “pivotal” and calls it, in fact, the “pearl” of John Paul II’s teaching. Christopher West finds

“Constructive criticism is certainly due.”

the most attractive part of the great Pope’s message to be a call to liberation from the disordered life that he and so many people who have grown up in our sex-saturated culture have entered into. He describes the Pope’s bold affirmation of the power of grace over sin as an echo of Isaiah the prophet: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives...” Without doubt, the Pope’s strong reiteration of the Gospel, as it refers to this aspect of human life, is liberating. His encouragement to throw off the chains of sin and lust is most needed for our time. The question appears to be, however: how are we to interpret the Pope’s expressions, “liberation from concupiscence – or, more precisely, from the domination of concupiscence”? West acknowledges that full redemption will not come in this life, but he maintains that he is only proclaiming the sort of freedom that is within the reach of *homo viator*.

West does acknowledge that such liberation as is possible in this life comes only with progress in the spiritual life. “Virtue, however, in the full Christian sense of the term, is only possible as we journey through the ‘purgative’ way of the interior life and into what the mystical tradition calls the ‘illuminative’ and ‘unitive’ ways. It is here, in these further stages of the journey, that we discover ‘mature purity.’” Now, with this, I dare say, Schindler, von Hildebrand, and the rest of West’s critics would readily concur: significant liberation from concupiscence can come with high levels of sanctity. The problem, however, is that few people actually do progress beyond the purgative stage. Certainly all of the wounded young people at West’s conferences still asking the sort of question that one hesitates to print must be supposed to be far from this “mature purity”. West’s rapid passage from the *call* to freedom from the domination of concupiscence to the dispensing with a traditionally cautious approach to sexual matters is one that certainly needs review. He has acknowledged that in his early talks he should have spoken about concupiscence more.

Christopher West naturally alludes to Isaiah because he himself has a truly prophetic heart. He wants so very much to call all men to genuine sexual freedom. The difficulties that he has encountered since his *Nightline* interview seem to stem from his ardent desire to accomplish this feat. Yet, hasn’t the Church been preaching the gospel of freedom from lust for many centuries? Alas, she will always be crying out in the wilderness, even if the peace and joy of conjugal chastity has been known and lived by millions. There is a great novelty in John Paul II’s thought, to be sure: he has provided a great impetus, profound insights and updated language. Still, his thought must be read within a hermeneutic of continuity, not discontinuity. Eager for progress, West seems to emphasise the discontinuity. He repeats the fact that his audience claims to have never

heard his message before. Smith calls him “a pioneer” in both her essays. West contrasts John Paul II’s teaching to the traditional approach, which he sees as puritanical (moments of laxism in the manuals notwithstanding). One wonders: has West sufficiently distinguished a puritanical spirit from the traditionally cautious Catholic tradition that the Pope is developing, not discarding? Certainly, West’s rhetoric seems to have led to a confusion of reverence with prudishness and of liberation by grace with the sexual revolution. Here it seems we find the fuse to the powder keg touched off by the *Nightline* interview. When West perceived Hefner’s innovation as somehow related to John Paul II’s, no one thought that he was supporting *Playboy* magazine. Still, he certainly was criticising the *status quo* that Hefner upset, and claiming John Paul II’s authority to do so. West’s assertion, shown on *Nightline*, is truly disturbing: “Christians must not retreat from what the sexual revolution began; Christians must complete what the sexual revolution began”. Ironically, in the foreword to West’s own commentary on the papal teachings, George Weigel gives a more sober commentary: “A sex-saturated culture imagines that the sexual revolution has been liberating. The opposite is the truth.”¹⁴

Now, on the blogosphere, silence regarding these matters has at last ensued. Still, the controversy has surely not gone away. For our part, Schindler seems to have provided the key to advancement when he argued that the problem with West’s treatment of concupiscence was one of emphasis. Emphasis is needed for balance, and balance is needed to avoid nasty falls.

[Ed: We discussed appropriate developments in this area in our March 2006 editorial, “Confusion over the Meanings of Marriage”, and attempted them in our March 2009 editorial “The Assault upon the Sexes”]

Notes

¹For a useful summary of the back and forth see http://www.headlinebistro.com/hb/en/news/jp2_theologyofbody.html

²http://www.headlinebistro.com/hb/en/news/west_schindler2.html

³<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/archive/2009/11/20/>

⁴http://www.headlinebistro.com/en/news/granados_west.html

⁵<http://www.zenit.org/article-26893?l=english>

⁶<http://www.headlinebistro.com/hb/en/news/janetsmithresponse.html>

⁷http://www.headlinebistro.com/hb/en/news/schindler_response.html

⁸For Smith, see: http://www.headlinebistro.com/en/news/smith_schindler.html, and for Waldstein: http://www.headlinebistro.com/hb/en/news/waldstein_schindler.html

⁹http://www.thepersonalistproject.org/index.php/TPP/the_linde/1290/

¹⁰Popcak, Gregory K., *Holy Sex* (Crossroad: New York, 2008), 102. Emphasis in the original.

¹¹Pius XII, Oct. 29, 1951, AAS 43: 852.

¹²Popcak, *Holy Sex*, 191.

¹³<http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/document.php?n=946>

¹⁴George Weigel writing in Christopher West, *Theology of the Body Explained: a Commentary on John Paul II’s ‘Gospel of the Body’* (Pauline: Boston, 2003), xvi.

Shallow Comparisons and the Papal Visit *by Joanna Bogle*

Watch for the new trend: I predict that, as the visit of Pope Benedict XVI to Britain draws nearer, the line of attack will be to contrast this “harsh, overbearing” Pope with the “gentle, warm-hearted” John Paul II. This from media commentators who spent much of JP II’s reign telling everyone about the harsh and overbearing Pole.

I remember well how, especially in the latter years of John Paul’s reign, it became fashionable to suggest that (a) he had become bitter and soured through a failure to communicate his message, especially on sexual ethics, (b) he was surrounded by nutcases and/or was being driven by factions dominated by Opus Dei and other powerful “right-wing lobbyists”, and (c) that, partly through his physical limitations, he had reverted to a safety-zone of Polish paranoia and traditional devotions bordering on superstition. Remember the rumour that he was going to announce – infallibly – that Mary was present along with Christ in the Eucharist?

Then we got Benedict XVI, and after warning us that he was going to be narrow-minded and nasty, the media discovered that he was a gentle academic with a large mind and large vision, and a striking ability to communicate large ideas. So he was given a honeymoon period, if only out of media bafflement. From this emerged various myths, chief of which was that John Paul II had been “obsessed with sexual morality” while Benedict would, by implication, take a more tolerant approach. Remember the rumour that he was going to “allow the use of condoms in order to prevent transmission of the AIDS virus”?

And now, well, the truth has emerged. Two men, both committed to a lifetime of service to God, each in turn called to serve as successor of St Peter, and each extraordinarily capable of serving in that office and blessed with remarkable gifts. Neither of them particularly harsh or overbearing, both men of humour, wisdom and mercy, both of outstanding intellect. And both committed to preaching the truths of the faith in and out of season.

And so when the Papal visit in 2010 was formally announced, it coincided with a Papal discourse to the English bishops which touched on the injustices of government plans to impose restrictive laws on churches – and there was a media outcry. Papal aggression! The Pope had expressed support for the English Bishops in their concerns about the planned law, and noted that “the effect of some of the legislation... has been to impose unjust limitations on the freedom of religious communities to act in accordance with their beliefs. In some respects it actually violates the natural law upon which the equality of all human beings is grounded and by which it is guaranteed.” (Catholic commentators also noted, somewhat gleefully, that the Pope also called upon the bishops to take their own task a lot more seriously, presenting “the full saving message of Christ” and ensuring that the Church speaks “with a united voice”.)

How dare a Pope speak out in defence of the Church! The National Secular Society announced itself outraged. And, given the increasingly aggressive atheism that has been made fashionable over recent years, the mood felt distinctly nasty. The new take was established: this Pope is a nasty aggressive German, so different from the dear gentle old Polish chap who only preached peace and love...

And meanwhile some Catholics are unwittingly joining in with the ah-but-these-two-Popes-are-different line. For a start, some ultra-traditionalists simply loathe John Paul, are angry about his progress towards beatification, and seize every possible moment to denigrate him. It is in their interests to boost Pope Benedict as the radical alternative, and this they are currently seeking to do.

They have problems with this, and are well aware of them, but hope to clear thought by shrill pronouncements. Thus they denounced John Paul’s visit to a synagogue – but then found they were embarrassed by Pope Benedict’s high-profile visit, the warmth of his reception, and the profound message that he brought, which took further – and was intended to – the tentative beginnings in Christian-Jewish dialogue which John Paul had initiated. It has become clear that Benedict XVI sees a theological deepening of this dialogue. His speech was extremely well received – interrupted several times by prolonged applause – not only because he emphasised solidarity with the Jewish people and a recognition of their suffering in recent history, but because he also emphasised the profound importance of the bond between the Jewish people and God, the value of the Jewish Scriptures, and the significance of this for the Church and for all time.

Another standard attack on Pope John Paul was to denounce his gestures of respect towards Islam – but then Pope Benedict was filmed praying in a mosque. Then there was the suggestion that John Paul II was just an actor, a flamboyant speaker, even a show-off – and then revelations emerged of his personal penances and austerities, the private spiritual life which inspired his extraordinary evangelical zeal.

The reality is that these two Popes have been unusually close in their approach to many central issues of our time – and this is unsurprising because the present Pope was the chief theological adviser to the previous one, and the two were intellectually and spiritually close. In his first words to the great crowd in St Peter’s Square after his election, Pope Benedict spoke of “the great John Paul” and the next day, addressing the cardinals, he said, rather movingly, “I seem to feel his strong hand holding mine. I feel I can see his smiling eyes and hear his words, at this moment particularly directed at me: ‘Be Not Afraid.’”

Both men were brought up with traditions of deep family piety. In John Paul’s case this sustained him through the

“How dare a Pope speak out in defence of the Church!”

loss of his mother and a beloved older brother. His descriptions of seeing his father deep in prayer are a glimpse into an affectionate father-son bond which clearly forged his own manhood. Thus for a while we had some commentators who liked to contrast John Paul “the emotional” with Benedict “the intellectual”, the former relying on old-fashioned, simple devotions while the latter had a more sophisticated approach. Then we saw film of Benedict on holiday, quietly saying the Rosary with his companions on a country walk, and stopping to visit a local shrine (rather an endearing picture of him on tiptoe, peering in at a window).

In studying the lives and achievements of these two men, I think that future historians will very often link them together, and not merely because their lives overlapped and the one succeeded the other to the Papacy. They are both men of a distinct era – one from the East, one from the West, of Europe in a century which saw the two halves divided as never before and also coming together again. They were both profoundly influenced by their backgrounds, each with a strong sense of place – John Paul so very Polish, Benedict deeply Bavarian. Both are men of large vision – the Tatra Mountains and the Bavarian alps somehow lifting their eyes to the heights, and both lovers of learning, of language, of God’s glory in nature and his gifts to men in music and the arts.

“Given the increasingly aggressive
atheism, the mood felt distinctly nasty”

Differences? In style, of course, although Benedict’s ability to communicate with the young seems to be pretty good judging from two World Youth Days and innumerable gatherings at Rome, Rimini and elsewhere. In priorities – well, clearly Benedict is making good liturgy one of his, while John Paul seemed to concentrate more on communicating the message by preaching. But even here it is difficult to draw strict lines. Pope Benedict has indicated clearly that he believes we should receive Communion with great reverence, preferably kneeling – but no more powerful message about that could be given than the sight of John Paul, frail and in obvious pain in his illness and old age, struggling out of his chair and on to his knees to receive his Saviour. Ecumenism? Benedict’s invitation to Anglicans is a well-timed and large initiative that will gather long-term graces and significance, and is the concrete result of Anglicanism’s own path in recent decades – it is difficult to imagine John Paul disapproving.

In the end, each time there is a good man on the throne of St Peter, a good contribution is made through God’s providence. One last, extraordinary, piece of information to fit into the complex jigsaw. One of the more controversial acts of Pope Benedict’s reign so far was to open the way for the beatification of Pope Pius XII. Now, there are those who would doubtless like to suggest that “good old John

Paul II” would not have sought to honour this wartime Pope, whose photographic image seems so austere and who struggled to do what was right at a time when the Polish nation was enduring huge suffering and the world was at war. But...a recent news story featured a possible miracle that might be used for Pius’ beatification. A woman had been praying to John Paul for his intercession in a difficult case of illness. He appeared to her in a dream and urged her to pray to “a thin-looking priest”. She did not recognise the latter until she saw a picture of Pius XII: “That’s him!” Her prayers were answered. If the story is true, it binds together two holy Popes whom the popular news media might have thought to be at variance.

As we cheer St Peter’s successor on his visit to Britain later this year, we will probably be uncomfortably aware that there will be plenty of efforts to wreck the trip, to make tensions and divisions appear among Christ’s flock, to spoil what could be a joyous and uplifting event, and to block any spiritual benefits which might flow. To prevent any such efforts succeeding, we need plenty of prayers. Mine will include invoking the aid from Heaven of John Paul II and not a few of his predecessors. Don’t be afraid to do the same. ■

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Priestly Contributions to Modern Science: The Case of Monsignor Georges Lemaître *by Joseph R. Laracy*

In a timely piece for the Year of the Priest, Joseph Laracy shows that Monsignor Georges Lemaître is a recent and significant example of the importance of Catholic priests to the rise of science. Mr Laracy is a seminarian for the Archdiocese of Newark, New Jersey, USA, in formation at the Pontifical North American College in Rome. Before to that he was a research assistant at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

One of the significant obstacles to Christian evangelisation in the 21st century is the widely held notion in the West, both by fundamentalist¹ Christians and by non-Christians, that there is an inherent conflict between science and religion. Such people are comfortable with such a position because they see reason and faith to be at odds as well. Religion and theology is viewed simply as a blind leap of faith, rather than *fides quaerens intellectum*. St Augustine has strong words for those who take up the mantle of Christ and further this divide.

“It is a disgraceful and dangerous thing for an infidel to hear a Christian, presumably giving the meaning of Holy Scripture, talking nonsense on these topics [of cosmology]...If [non-Christians] find a Christian mistaken in a field which they themselves know well and hear him maintaining his foolish opinions about our books, how are they going to believe those books in matters concerning the resurrection of the dead, the hope of eternal life, and the kingdom of heaven, when they think their pages are full of falsehoods on facts which they themselves have learnt from experience and the light of reason? Reckless and incompetent expounders of Holy Scripture bring untold trouble and sorrow on their wiser brethren when they are caught in one of their mischievous false opinions and are taken to task by those who are not bound by the authority of our sacred books.”²

Clearly, it is essential to provide a credible witness of serious Christians committed to the advancement of science and what better witness could there be than the clergy themselves. Physicist Stephen Barr and others provide an impressive list of Churchmen throughout history that have made lasting contributions to modern science:³

- Pope Sylvester II (ca. 946-1003), Pope who reintroduced Arabic numerals and the abacus to Europe.⁴
- Bishop Robert Grosseteste (ca. 1168-1253), Bishop of Lincoln and founder of the “Oxford School” known for developing the tradition of experimental science.
- Archbishop Thomas Bradwardine (1290-1349), Archbishop of Canterbury who was one of the first people to write down an equation for a physical process.
- Bishop Nicholas of Oresme (1323-1382), Bishop of Lisieux who as a mathematician discovered how to combine exponents and developed graphs of mathematical functions and as a physicist explained the motion of the Sun by the rotation of the Earth and developed a more rigorous understanding of acceleration and inertia.

- Cardinal Nicolas of Cusa (1401-1464), Bishop of Brixon mathematician as well as astronomer who postulated non-circular planetary orbits, developed a mathematical theory of relative motion, and even used concave lenses to correct near-sightedness.
- Canon Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543), Cleric who formulated a heliocentric model of the Solar System.⁵
- Fr Francesco Cavalieri, SJ (1598-1647), Priest who played a pivotal role in the development of calculus and made contributions in geometry, optics, and mechanics.
- Fr Marin Mersenne (1588-1648), Priest who made contributions to number theory, the mathematics of music, afocal forms of the two-mirror telescope, and other areas of physics and astronomy.
- Fr Christoph Scheiner, SJ (1573-1650), Priest who discovered sunspots and the rotation of the sun.
- Fr Francesco Grimaldi, SJ (1630-1653), Priest who made fundamental contributions to lunar cartography as well as optics (refraction, diffraction, destructive interference of radiation).
- Fr Giovanni Riccioli, SJ (1598-1671), Priest who discovered the first binary star.
- Fr Francesco Lana de Terzi, SJ (1631-1687), Priest who was a pioneer in the field of aeronautics.
- Fr Girolamo Saccheri, SJ (1677-1733), Priest who developed the theorems of hyperbolic (non-Euclidian) geometry.⁶
- Fr Lazzaro Spallanzani (1729-1799), Priest who conducted research in biology, vulcanology, and meteorology. He explained the process of human digestion through gastric acids, as well as fertilisation, respiration, and regeneration in animals. He also empirically disproved the widely held hypothesis of spontaneous generation.
- Fr Giuseppe Piazzi, CR (1746-1826), Priest who first discovered an asteroid, Ceres.
- Fr Bernhard Bolzano (1781-1848), Priest who contributed to the theory of functions of one real variable, the theory of differentiation, the concept of infinity, and the binomial theorem.⁷
- Fr Pietro Secchi, SJ (1818-1878), Priest who developed a spectral classification of stars, invented the meteorograph, and correctly understood nebulae to be gaseous.

“Lemaître proposed a model which was not only mathematically pleasing, but consistent with astronomical observation and physics.”

- Fr Gregor Mendel, OSA (1822-1884), Priest who described the laws of heredity and recognised as the “father of genetics.”
- Fr Julius Nieuwland, CSC (1878-1936), Priest who co-developed the first synthetic rubber, neoprene.
- Fr Henri Breuil (1877-1961), Priest whose work as a paleontologist and geologist has earned him the title of “father of pre-history.”
- Msgr Georges Lemaître (1894-1966), Priest who formulated the Big Bang hypothesis of the universe as well as making significant contributions to celestial mechanics and our understanding of galactic structure.

The last figure mentioned here, Monsignor Georges Lemaître, is one of the most important astrophysicists of the 20th century. His accomplishments merit further elaboration as the dissemination of his life⁸ and Christian witness can perhaps make him the “apostle to the scientists” of the 21st century.

Modern Cosmology

According to Odon Godart, Lemaître’s assistant, and Michael Heller the recent Templeton prize winner, cosmology is one of the youngest sciences yet has the longest history⁹ for probably since the beginning, man has contemplated the Heavens. In Lemaître’s time, both philosophy and science were very much affected by the concept of relativity. Einstein’s theories were challenging strongly held scientific positions and were also being misapplied in the humanities and social sciences. According to Paul Dirac, Pontifical Academician, relativity “provided an entirely new outlook to dominate man’s view of nature.”¹⁰

Lemaître’s principal area of study was relativistic cosmology. After completing his first doctorate in mathematics and studying relativity on his own as a seminarian, he had the tools to join Sir Arthur Eddington and Harlow Shapley in their investigation of the astronomical implications of relativity and earned a second doctorate, in Physics, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. As a result of this investigation, Monsignor Lemaître developed an understanding of the relationship between galaxy red shift and the expansion of the universe. This led him to reject Einstein’s model of a static universe. Einstein’s solution of the general relativity equation for a homogeneous universe was intrinsically unstable. Lemaître proposed a dynamical model which was not only mathematically pleasing, but consistent with astronomical observation and physics.¹¹ This approach took cosmology from the hands of mathematicians and put it in the hands of physicists.¹²

According to Rev Hubert Vecchierello, OFM, PhD, “The theory [Lemaître’s model] is a daring one, sweeping aside old astronomical ideas and presenting a picture which is not only one of great splendour but also has the added beauty of seeking to reconcile several conflicting notions held by

pre-eminent scientists.” In Lemaître’s own words, “Most of the work I have done with the theory of the expanding universe [...] is to reconcile it with the evidence of astronomers.” See the next two pages for an overview of Lemaître’s ingenious insights.

His interest in cosmology also led him to investigate the study of the structure of the universe. The formation of galaxies and clusters of galaxies fascinated him. On 9 June, 1958, Lemaître presented his theory on the structure of the universe in Brussels to about forty physicists and astronomers. The attendees included such men as Robert Oppenheimer and Wolfgang Pauli.¹³

Lemaître’s Witness

When not exercising his God-given scientific intellect, Lemaître lived like any other Christian man. He enjoyed walking either alone so he could ponder new ideas or with friends to enjoy conversation. Many walks ended at a pastry shop on the first floor of his apartment building. Georges Lemaître loved to play the piano although his neighbours at the College du Saint-Esprit didn’t share his appreciation and even encouraged him to move! Lemaître’s friends and colleagues unanimously agreed that he was very sociable, cheerful, and optimistic. “He liked the good things God had put at our disposal. He did not scorn a good cake, a good bottle, a tasty dinner; everything within the limits of reason.”¹⁴

Godart and Heller further describe Lemaître in this way:

“Great involvement in science and scientific work did not temper Lemaître’s religious impulse that had led him to the priesthood [...] He was a very good priest, very comprehensive, considering Christianity on a much deeper level than its exterior formalisms. He practised the Christian essence. This means, first of all, the effective love of neighbour.”¹⁵

Towards the end of Lemaître’s life, Professor Godart and his research assistants would function as Lemaître’s interface to the university computer. During these visits, they would enjoy a whisky on the rocks and good conversation. In this context, Lemaître encouraged Godart to create the Institute of Astronomy and Geophysics. He also predicted that the space era would speed up the information revolution and the interest of engineers in computers.¹⁶ Monsignor Lemaître would no doubt share the view of Saint Athanasius who said:

“For if the movement of the universe was irrational, and the world rolled on in random (i.e. indeterminate) fashion, one would be justified in disbelieving what we say. But if the world is founded on reason, wisdom and science, and is filled with orderly beauty, then it must owe its origin and order to none other than the Word of God.”¹⁷

Priestly Contributions to Modern Science: The Case of Monsignor Georges Lemaître continued

An Overview of Lemaître's Significant Theoretical Advances

Lemaître describes the basis for his theory in this way:

"We must have a fireworks theory of evolution. The fireworks are over and just the smoke is left. Cosmology must try to picture the splendour of the fireworks. If the Earth were a hundred billion years old, or if the universe were that old, all the nebulae would be out of range of our telescopes and all the radium would be exhausted... The universe is a great number of energy packets that continuously divided themselves. Go back to it all and energy must have existed in one packet... We know that the volume of space is increasing. We know a type of evolution that gives a zero radius... But we must go even beyond that. That takes us to inter-nebular space, where we should expect to find the story of the primeval fireworks that preceded the formation of the expanding universe. In that library of inter-nebular space, we find the story, the characters of which are the writings of cosmic rays... Cosmic rays are the birth cries of the universe still lingering with us."¹⁸

Lemaître's original model included an initial singularity followed by an expansion damped using Einstein's constant followed by another expansion. In this way, he was probably the first scientist to realise that a synthesis of quantum mechanics and general relativity is necessary to adequately explain the origin of the universe. Despite the fact that the mathematical tools at his disposal were significantly less advanced than are available today, many of his comments on the origin of space-time could easily be found in a contemporary physics paper.¹⁹

According to Turek, "The significance of Lemaître's work for cosmology lies not in his particular solutions to Einstein's field equations, but rather in the new approach he provided to fundamental questions in cosmology."²⁰ For this approach, Lemaître is widely regarded as the founder of physical cosmology and the "Father of the Big Bang Theory." His particular solution involved a universe expanding logarithmically from time equals minus infinity.

However, the singularity itself had many infinite quantities such as curvature and density, which made it difficult for many scientists to accept.²¹ Today, through the use of modern mathematical methodologies, most astrophysicists believe that the singularity can be eliminated by a robust theory of quantum gravity. Lemaître's application of quantum effects did not remove a singularity from his model but did provide "geometric support" for a primordial quantum of energy.²² Using his own theory of expansion and fundamental thermodynamics, Lemaître did in fact conclude that in the initial stages, quantum laws were the dominant player.²³

A Significant Step Forward

It is helpful to see the diversity of scientific thought in the 1920s and 30s. Albert Einstein's model of the universe included a cosmological constant which permitted a static, finite universe, closed, but not bounded. However, the astronomer Edwin Hubble observed that spiral nebulae were retreating from the Earth at velocities proportional to their distance, thereby suggesting an expanding universe. The mathematician Willem de Sitter developed a mathematically interesting model that includes expansion but did not match Hubble's observations. It was also physically impossible because it implied that the universe has zero density for matter everywhere! Independently of Georges Lemaître, the Soviet mathematician and meteorologist, Alexander Friedman developed a model by taking particular solutions to Einstein's equations which defined a spatially homogeneous, isotropic universe with a finite radius varying with time.²⁴

Monsignor Lemaître investigated models with a positive cosmological constant, $\Lambda > 0$,²⁵ so that initial conditions permit a universe expanding from a large density followed by a quasi-static stage when gravity nearly cancels Λ followed by growth similar to de Sitter's limiting case. Lemaître was one of the first to identify Olbers' paradox, the fact that in Einstein's static universe, stars would have shone forever and the starlight would aggregate toward infinity. According to Jim Peebles of Princeton University, Lemaître's framework for cosmology is still relevant today because it "consider[s] scenarios for the evolution of structure that start at high redshift with initial conditions that do not seem unduly conjured, evolve according to accepted laws of physics, and end up looking more or less like the universe we observe."²⁶

In a letter to Sir Arthur Eddington, Lemaître wrote:

"Now, in atomic processes, the notion of space and time are no more than statistical notions: they fade out when applied to individual phenomena involving but a small number of quanta. If the world has begun with a single quantum, the notions of space and time would altogether fail to have any meaning at the beginning."²⁷

Given this and the lack of contemporary mathematics, cosmology was an area of investigation that required great imagination. However, Lemaître's ideas have an even more challenging implication: an evolutionary universe may permit laws of nature that also evolve. Parameters that are assumed to be variable may actually vary – but too slowly for changes in their value to be observed. If the "constant of gravitation" is not a constant, but changes with time, then models which assume no change must be modified or perhaps discarded.²⁸

“Great involvement in science did not temper his religious impulse.”

Celestial Mechanics and Galactic Structure

By 1950, Monsignor Lemaître’s research had primarily shifted out of cosmology. He then pursued celestial mechanics, numerical analysis, and the history of science. The latter interest originally developed during his younger years, studying under the direction of a famous historian of science, Father Henri Bosman, S.J.²⁹

Lemaître’s work in computational science was motivated not only by a search for mathematical tools to support his other research, but also by a desire to develop further the discipline itself. In 1955 he published a series of papers on topics such as the integration of systems of differential equations, harmonic analysis, and rational iteration.³⁰

In his pursuit of the elusive cosmic radiation which would support the Big Bang, Lemaître made contributions to the fields of numeral analysis and analytical mechanics. His theoretical framework involved characterising the structure of dynamical systems, computing singular periodic orbits, and calculating their asymptotic behaviour under constraints.³¹ Also, Lemaître’s prediction that cosmic rays would include α and β particles in addition to photons is now confirmed by observation.

Despite Lemaître choosing not to pursue the career in mechanical engineering for which he had originally studied, his interest in mechanics lasted his entire career as a physicist. Lemaître’s contributions to the classical three body problem greatly advanced our knowledge of the motion of bodies in the universe.³² Lemaître showed that by taking the masses of the bodies to be small and their radial distance to be large, one could develop a solution for relativistic celestial mechanics.

As early as 1920, after hearing Elie Cartan’s lectures on integral invariants, Lemaître began to apply Cartan’s geometric approach in an ingenious manner to develop systems of equations for some previously intractable problems. This type of work enabled the “big bang” of scientific computing.³³

I would like to thank Dr Kenneth Howell, Dr Stephen Barr, Rev Douglas Milewski, and Emanuel Stoica for their assistance in preparing this manuscript.

Notes

¹By fundamentalism, I refer to a rigid literalism that wrenches a text from the context of a passage in Sacred Scripture and the living Tradition of the Church. As a type of ideology, it is a comprehensive world-view that is resistant to evidence and inquiry. Ideology always implies an unreasoned, blind assent to a set of ideas that bears not the mark of faith, which is *light*. This view is inimical to the approach of *Fides et Ratio*.

²Saint Augustine, *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, trans. John Hammond Taylor, SJ (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), 42-43.

³Stephen M. Barr, *Modern Physics and Ancient Faith* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 9-10.

⁴J.P. Kirsch, “Sylvester II,” *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. Kevin Knight, (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1912).

⁵J. Hagen, “Nicolaus Copernicus,” *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. Kevin Knight, (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1908).

⁶B. Wilhelm, “Francesco Lana,” *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. Kevin Knight, (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910).

⁷Matthias Leimkuhler, “Bernhard Bolzano,” *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, ed. Kevin Knight, (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907).

⁸For further reading on the life of Lemaître, see Joseph R. Laracy, “The Faith and Reason of Father George Lemaître,” *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*, February 2009.

⁹Godart and Heller, *Cosmology of Lemaître*, (Tuscon: Pachart, 1985), 13.

¹⁰Paul A.M. Dirac, *The Scientific Work of Georges Lemaître*, Vol. 36, (Vatican: Pontifical Academy of Science), 67.

¹¹Berger, *The Big Bang and Georges Lemaître*, 394.

¹²Frederick Lamb, Personal Interview, February 28, 2005.

¹³Berger, *The Big Bang and Georges Lemaître*, 299.

¹⁴Godart and Heller, *Cosmology of Lemaître*, 186.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷St. Athanasius, *Discourse Against the Pagans*, in *The Liturgy of the Hours*, vol. 3 (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1974), 67.

¹⁸Hubert Vecchierello, *Einstein and Relativity; Lemaître and the Expanding Universe* (Paterson: St. Anthony Guild Press, 1934), 19-22.

¹⁹A.G. Pacholczyk, *Lemaître, Big Bang, and the Quantum Universe* (Tuscon: Paschart Publishing, 1996), 14.

²⁰Jósef Turek, *Georges Lemaître and the Pontifical Academy of Sciences*, (Vatican City: Vatican Observatory Publications, 1989), 2.

²¹Pacholczyk, *Lemaître, Big Bang, and the Quantum Universe*, 15.

²²It is now known that strong curvature singularities lead to catastrophic effects which Lemaître could not have foreseen. At that time, scientists did not have modern field theories, gauge methods, unifying schemes, and canonical quantisation of space-time.

²³Quantum mechanics dictated that the universe be described as a collection of potential states. Equal occupation of all possible states is probabilistically most likely and therefore would represent the *final* distribution. This distribution maximises entropy so minimum entropy would be found in a system with all energy contained in a few quanta; hence, the Primeval Atom hypothesis. See Pacholczyk, *Lemaître, Big Bang, and the Quantum Universe*, 31.

²⁴Dirac, *The Scientific Work of Georges Lemaître*, 6.

²⁵Lemaître’s famous differential equation for cosmic expansion is: $R^2 = C/R + 1/3\Lambda R^2 - k$ where R is the scale factor for cosmic expansion which is proportional to the radius of the universe when that radius has meaning; $C > 0$ and proportional to the average present-day density of non-relativistic matter in the universe; cosmological constant, $-\infty < \Lambda < \infty$, which serves to create a cosmic repulsion that keeps galaxies from being drawn together by gravity when it is positive and adds to the attractive force of gravity when it is negative; and spatial curvature, $k = -1, 0, +1$. Lemaître solved the equation for $k = +1$ and $\Lambda > \Lambda_c$ for a big bang model. The significance of these assumptions is that Λ is greater than the critical value of the cosmological constant, Λ_c , so the universe expands forever. Also, $k = +1$ implies a spherical geometry and a closed, finite universe ($k = 0$ is a flat, unbounded, and infinite universe while $k = -1$ is a saddle shaped, open, unbounded, and infinite universe). Modern observation indicates that the curvature is very near zero. However, the intrinsically inaccurate nature of measurement means that we may never know if the universe is actually flat, spherical, or saddle shaped. For more information see: Ray D’Inverno, *Introducing Einstein’s Relativity* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 331-341.

²⁶Berger, *The Big Bang and Georges Lemaître*, 24.

²⁷Pacholczyk, *Lemaître, Big Bang, and the Quantum Universe*, 33.

²⁸Dirac, *The Scientific Work of Georges Lemaître*, 16.

²⁹Godart and Heller, *Cosmology of Lemaître*, 181.

³⁰A.L. Berger ed., *The Big Bang and Georges Lemaître*, (Boston: D. Reidel Publishing, 1984), 394.

³¹Berger, *The Big Bang and Georges Lemaître*, 396.

³²Berger, *The Big Bang and Georges Lemaître*, 182.

³³Berger, *The Big Bang and Georges Lemaître*, 152.

The Quest for Feminine Identity

(Part Two) by Cormac Burke

Mgr Burke, a lecturer at Nairobi University, Kenya, continues his profound meditation upon the role of the feminine and of the gift of self in reaching human fulfilment. In this part he convincingly brings out the character of true love, and its counterfeit promoted within modern culture. Part One was published in our March issue.

5. Two Contrasting Modes of Sexual Identification

The main thesis of my book *Man and Values* is that we do not fulfil ourselves just around ourselves. The thrust of fulfilment is not inward, towards self, but outwards – towards values, especially as found in others. The discovery of worthwhile values, and the response to them, is the key. Not to be able to discover anything of real worth is a primary limitation in the development of one's life. Not to be able to respond to a real value once discovered, is an even more radical limitation. That is the reason for the sub-title given to the book, "A Personalist Anthropology", because its thesis reflects the basic principle of modern personalism: that we can only find ourselves through the sincere gift of ourselves.

One chapter in that book considers the humanising role of sexuality in general. Another considers marriage as a way of fulfilment through sexual self-gift and union. Now, in attempting to tie together the main elements of feminine identity, I would like to take these considerations a bit further and centre upon two realities that some might regard as opposed, and which I see as complementary. Further, the proper understanding of each and their relationship is basic to the attainment of feminine sexual identity. These two realities are virginity and marriage.

Virginity

True friendship, with its sincere elements of mutual self-giving, can be a step toward fulfilment. Whoever lacks a capacity for friendship does not come out of self and will not find fulfilment. Calculated friendship, by which one wants to receive at least as much as one gives, inherently limits happiness and fulfilment.

But the gift of self that truly fulfils must be total; and a total gift of self can only be made to one. There are two forms of self-giving which aim to be total: the gift of self to God, and the gift of self in marriage.

The sexes are made to give, to each other, but not to give easily; to give for the first time, and to give completely and exclusively. Casual or indiscriminate sexual self-giving, which really implies partial self-giving, tends to reduce the very power to give oneself, for it reduces the self that is given. This is why the self-giving of sexuality should be a virginal self-giving, for then it is indeed the total gift of self – of a self that has never been given to anyone else before.

We will leave aside the virginal giving of self to God, just noting that since the sexes – man and woman – "image" God, virginal giving to God is to transcend the image and give oneself to the Reality that is imaged.¹

On the human level, virginity means keeping oneself in order to give; keeping what is unique so as to be able to give oneself uniquely. Only in the context of marital self-giving can the greatness of virginity be understood – the preserving and maturing of one's self so as to have a worthwhile self to give, and

to be able to give it whole and exclusive, as any true gift must be.

A virginal union in marriage says so much, much more than any words can say. It says in effect: I have been tempted to give or to throw away parts of myself. But I have managed to keep myself entire, for love.² I was waiting for the one person whom I could feel to be worth all of my love, all of my heart, all of myself. And you are that person. I give myself entirely now for the first time. Take me; I am yours. This speaks so much of the past and promises so much for the future.

Marriage. Self-gift – to Love, to Life

The truly human attraction between the sexes is toward a corporal union that incarnates a spiritual union; a mutual gift of the body that represents a mutual gift of self. A gift, however, not a loan or a mere permission to use – which is a travesty of the human meaning or exercise of sexuality.

The readiness to give implies the disposition to receive. Our fulfilment depends on our openness to values and our receptivity towards them. Does that mean a dependence? Of course! The false exaltation of a closed and impervious independence is one of the main blocks today to human fulfilment. The phenomenon of human love – I delight in you, I want you and what is good for you, I need you and I want to be what you truly need; if you will take me so and give yourself to me, I will try to give myself to you so – belies the pitiful and destructive myth of total personal autonomy.

Sigrid Undset was the author of the Nobel Prize winning novel *Kristin Lavransdatter*. In one of her earlier books, Jenny, the protagonist, in a juvenile assertion of independence, says to the man she will eventually fall in love with, "You can't love something you're dependent on, can you?" [He does not quite agree]. "I don't know. Aren't you always dependent on what you love? You're dependent on your work, aren't you? And if you're fond of someone, isn't that when you first become truly dependent?" – "Well, yes..." She thought for a moment. "But then you've made your own choice," she said briskly. "I mean, you're not a slave; you voluntarily serve something or someone that you value more than yourself".³

Precisely. None of us can achieve our human identity unless we discover something we value more than self, and to which and for which we are prepared to give our self.

That is not the way we are encouraged to think in today's world. We are rather taught the opposite. Take what you can get from life. Expect that others will esteem you not by what you give but by what you manage to get. We are taught to love nothing else than our sterile independence, our bubble self-esteem and the self-importance of our work – as if this could fill us. In that same novel, someone comments to Jenny, "Maybe you think that it's only women who find life meaningless or feel their hearts frozen and empty when they

“None of us can achieve our human identity unless we discover something we value more than self.”

don't have anything but their work to love? Just their own impulses, and nothing else to rely on! Do you think there's a single soul alive who doesn't have moments of self-doubt? No, there has to be another person with whom you can deposit the best of yourself – your love and your trust – and that's the bank you must be able to rely on".⁴ Is it possible that the current global collapse of confidence in our financial institutions could help people clutch their way back to a different sense of values and to the commitment of self which underlies any firm investment in their own happiness?

Creativity: the Family Project

Self-gift – to love, to life – go together. Love for another is love for the life of another. It is love for life with another; and for what eventuates from that united life. Love and life and creativity go together. One of the major impoverishments of our value-free world is that we are no longer artists, no longer creative in any true sense. What sort of creativity can spring from a life-view which refuses to envision limitless beauty, goodness, love, life, glory, generosity – or their opposites? Without a personal sense of being involved in a win-all/lose-all affair, life itself is made banal.

That is why another reason for the shakiness of feminine identity today is, I think, woman's loss of her sense of distinctive creativity. True; some women, like some men, get engaged in creative activities – gardening, design... But what motivates them? What does it all amount to? Maybe just the satisfaction of looking at something I did "of my own"; maybe the self-centred vanity of hoping others will admire it; maybe the desire to leave behind a bit of myself. But how is it that woman in particular should have lost the sense of the wonder of her greatest artistic capacity, her power to create new life itself, to pro-create – which is really to co-create, to be joint creators with God himself?

Yes, of course this applies to men as much as to women. The privilege is the same. But the miserable presentation of the contraceptive movement in terms of women's rights – the right to be free from the burden of child-bearing – has blinded so many women to the peculiar privilege of motherhood.

But surely – one may object – it is undeniable that the woman has the greater part in this: in pregnancy, in giving birth; and yes, in rearing. And is this greater burden not unfair to woman? Greater burden? Is that all there is to be said? Is it unfair to her that she has the greater privilege and that as a good mother she will stand higher, at least in her children's estimation, than a good father?

Does motherhood demand more of a woman than fatherhood of a man? Yes, because maternity is a greater mission and a unique privilege. But girls are no longer brought up to regard it so. Men should indeed be blamed for their neglect of their role as fathers. And thank God there are a growing number of feminists who are campaigning for a radical reform in this matter – not through getting men to wash an equal number of dishes, but by reviving in them the sense of what their man's role as a father calls for. But that will never be achieved without women who have a deep pride in their role as mothers.

6. Humanising Society

Let me here try to forestall an objection – that what I have expounded so far seems to suggest that a woman's place is in the home; and that she should go back there...

In a certain sense, yes I am suggesting that we all need to go back to the home. The only trouble is that, practically speaking, there is no home to go back to. Home needs to be remade. To be homemakers is one of the highest ideals for both men and women, especially today. It draws them on to true personal fulfilment, and involves them in the great enterprise of rehumanising our modern world.

To anyone who has real eyes to see with, the dehumanisation of present-day society is evident. It will continue unless the family, as a source and stable reference point for a person's values, is remade. And woman has a privileged role there. She needs to stop allowing herself to be exploited by those who would have her both stir up the worst of men's instincts and imitate the worst of men's defects. We need the active presence of woman in public and professional life; but a presence by which she brings with her the best of her feminine qualities, and not one where she declines into a servile imitation of men in the ruthless efficiency, the heartless dealing with persons, the manipulation of people and circumstances that so many men seem capable of.

The woman truly aware of her feminine identity has a special sense of her own dignity and of the respect due to it, and hence of the dignity due to every human being. She aspires to give life and, in giving life, she learns to respect life. She has an intuitive awareness of the deeper human concerns – and not just the technical issues – at stake in so many problems facing society.

But she will never develop her feminine identity without a sense of sexual complementarity, without an appreciation of man's strengths and man's weaknesses, without a sense of the dignity of virginity and of the glory of motherhood; without a sense that humanity is especially in her care.

Many women, with no pride in their feminine identity, try to live off pride in their masculine or pseudo-masculine achievements. Such achievements add nothing human to personal or societal enrichment. But if their professional competence carries with it a feminine stamp, then they are fulfilling themselves as well as exercising their peculiar ability to humanise society.

Are we far from that? Yes, indeed, for we have gone through a century in which woman has stepped down from her pedestal, has cast away her throne and her crown, and preferred to have the democratic right of being just one guy more. Some – few, I think – manage to be the tough guy and make the boardroom level. But most, as I see it, just end up as weaker guys and then grasp at the only power left to them – their sexual ability to exploit men's weakness. It is a degrading role, and a choice for degradation.

This is the situation to which radical feminism has led us. I am inclined to think that its radicalism could be traced to a few very intelligent and perhaps professionally successful women of the last three or four decades who became progressively more and more 'anti-men', maybe due to men's scant appreciation of their professional achievements. Along with that, not a few of

The Quest for Feminine Identity (Part Two)

continued

them would seem to have had a highly unsuccessful experience of love or marriage and family life. That would also explain why some appear so keen to enlist their daughters into their radicalism. If, as it seems, many of their daughters don't respond, this can certainly add to their resentment. And my impression is that such feminists are already among the most resentful elements in our resentful society. No society characterised by growing self-pity and resentment can for long survive.

For this is what we are faced with: a dehumanised, devalued, civilisation where, having stupidly mortgaged our life's possibilities, sinking them in the acquisition of material things, we see society totter on the verge of bankruptcy. In a frenzy of accumulating possessions and experiences, we have pawned or jettisoned the treasure of selfhood and self-gift, and now we are tempted to think there is no way of redeeming what has been so recklessly thrown away. Oh, but there is. It will take time, but there is a way to redemption, and it depends very principally on woman's proudly recovering her feminine identity.

7. Identity and Ideals

Virginité marks a stage toward that identity, inasmuch as it matures one for life and for love. Marriage and motherhood are the normal next step in personal development. A virgin has identity. A mother has identity. Both are ideals – to be sought, to be lived, to be proud of. Do young women today regard their life in the light of such ideals? What identity can possibly be left to them?

It is impossible to develop any worthwhile human identity without some worthwhile human ideal. But if you have no ideal – just goals of money, or power or pleasure – can you develop an identity worth having?

What a poor mentality is shown by the one who rejects the family project! "I am not interested in future generations, in people who may come after me, not even in those who could be a continuation of me, of my effort, of my dedication, of my worth as a person, of my love". But then, what am I interested in? In me? – in such a worthless me? Yes, then it is sadly logical that I should not want to perpetuate my valueless life. But, is that life of mine really and inexorably without values? No, no. I can change. I can help others to change, and bring coherence and purpose back to our world.

It is only natural to want to do something of worth with one's life. Marriage used to be considered the common, and yet individual, worthwhile adventure to which each one is called; and a large part of one's adolescent life was guided by the call to prepare for such a sacred venture. There was a sense of greatness in this preparation: the greatness of preparing oneself to share life with someone one can trust, to be someone who can oneself be trusted, to found a family, to continue the work of creation... There was and is a good pride here – a pride that the pusillanimous person can indeed turn his or her back on, and then be left with all the sadness of having had no ideals.

Some years ago a teacher who had found one of his students very down referred him to me. I talked with him a couple of times. Indeed he was down. It was hard to find any spark of life or ambition in him. Finally, perhaps in a moment of impatience,

I asked him, "But man, don't you have any ideals?" He hesitated and finally answered, "No". A bit taken aback, perhaps by the directness of his answer, I asked him again: "But, doesn't that seem sad to you?" His answer, once more after a pause, was just as direct: "Yes".

How much a No and a Yes can say about a life. Today if more men, and I think especially more women, asked themselves the question, "what ideals do I have in my life?" and answered sincerely, they would be in a better position to grasp the real value of their lives, and the prospect of real sadness and real emptiness that may be facing them.

A truly feminine identity – in the home no less than in the public square – is the means by which women can fulfil themselves. But it must be as women, not as ersatz or pseudo men! The fact is that those very qualities which fit woman to be a home-builder – her tact, her sense of justice due to each one, her readiness for service, her gift for being a peace-maker (when she wants), just to mention a few – are the very qualities needed so that she can play an outstanding role in rehumanising our professional and public life. That is the way our feminisms need to go: not forming tough guys, but forming thorough women.

However, the conditions should be clear. If women are going to mature in their sexual identity, they need to overcome the contempt for virginité, for home-making and motherhood, that has become so widespread today. Otherwise their intervention in professional and public life will lack that truly feminine and humanising influence contemporary society so badly needs.

What would our society gain from more women who have indeed managed – pace Henry Higgins – to be more like men: more efficient perhaps; at times even more ruthless? And what would those women have gained? More power, more dominance perhaps? But... more personality? More identity? More sense of belonging? More sense of mission?

Not a few feminists hold that the ills of the world have been largely the work of men. A case could be made for their point of view. But, then, why be so keen that women become more like men? Let's give a chance to women who, by asserting their identity, become more like women, and see if they make a better job of things. I think they can. But it is no small task; and, I repeat, the conditions are clear.

So many women, in these years of radical feminism, have set themselves the challenge of beating men, beating men taken at their worst. And, even when they have succeeded, they have missed the mark. For the challenge facing them is much greater, and is yet within their possibilities. Not to beat men at being men, but to beat themselves at being women: with minds and hearts large enough to care for a family, and as a result large enough also to humanise society. Society needs, badly needs, what truly feminine women, and only they, can give.

Notes

¹It should be noted too that the virginal gift of self to God expands the heart, with the result that there is more of it, and not less, to give also to others.

²There is a challenge, that shows worth, in virginité: the challenge of being a woman who prizes herself and will not let herself be easily won. What worth can a woman have if she does not prize herself? What *self-worth* – in this age of self-esteem – can she attribute to herself?

³Jenny in *The Unknown Sigrid Undset*, Steerforth Press, 2001, p. 37.

⁴ib. p. 168.



Cutting Edge

Science and Religion News

The Spiritual Soul?

Scientific Holism

A Colloquium on “Body, Soul and Mind: Aquinas and modern developments in Biotechnology and neuroscience” in Oxford last March emphasised the relevance of the philosophy of science. Whilst the talks at the Dominican organised event were Aquinas-lite there was a notable recognition that what has been termed substantial formality in the Catholic metaphysical tradition can now be seen to be a holistic organic unity. The Dominican Nicanor Austriaco of Providence College, Rhode Island, compared such unity to that of a musical symphony. He pointed out that in the biological world structure predicts function – to change the behaviour of something you change its structural relationship with its environment. These insights he suggested enable us to update the increasingly unpopular Thomistic hylomorphism without reinventing the wheel.

He went on to suggest that the specific, organised, stable pattern of the human body “manifests the immaterial soul.” In question time he refined this to say that it was only the specific epistemological capabilities of the human being that proved that our holistic formality was immaterial. Edward Holloway would want to tighten this position to point out that the intrinsic holistic structure of all matter is manifestly and necessarily immediately relative to an immaterial, specific, intelligent organising principle. The epistemological *and* environmental behaviour of the human exhibits its *own* specific, intelligent, organising principle – namely the spiritual soul.

David Albert Jones of St Mary’s College, Twickenham, convincingly and scientifically argued for a criterion of death that eschewed anything less or, one might say, “lower down” than the breakdown of the top-level, holistic unity of the human body. Afterwards he acknowledged that his calling this a “metaphysical” criteria, with the implication that such is *a priori* to “taking a look”, may not be helpful.

Such holistic unity applies to all *physical* things in the universe, as observed *a posteriori* by modern science.

The Evolution of the Human Brain

On 15th March, neuroscientist Prof. Colin Blakemore of Oxford and Warwick universities, delivered the Royal Society’s Ferrier lecture. He showed that after the slow and gradual increases in brain size in the previous hominid groups over the previous three million years, there was a very sudden increase at the dawn of *Homo Sapiens*, by a factor of two relative to body weight. Blakemore argues that a single gene mutation could in fact have been the cause of this increase – for in fact only one extra cell-division step would cause a doubling of brain size. Despite the price the human being had to pay for this in terms of body energy (the brain being very energy hungry), the mutation was retained as more of a help than a hindrance. Blakemore is happy to identify the first individual with this larger brain with the human being commonly referred to as “mitochondrial Eve,” “the mother of all the living.”

This is in harmony with the anthropological vision of Edward Holloway, with its maintenance of the crucial matter-spirit distinction, whilst avoiding any opposition dualism. He posits that the emergence of the human species involved the emergence of a brain power that outstrips the relatively stable power of the environment to minister it control and direction. Such physical ministrations is inherent to the purely physical realm below man, including the evolution of its most sophisticated organ, the brain. This is all immediately relative to the organising Mind of God. At the moment of the advent of man, this necessary mediation of control and direction is taken over by the spiritual soul, which is in the image of God.

The Evolution of Morality

In a recent series of articles in *The Guardian*, a number of authors have addressed the question of Darwinism and morality. Michael Ruse, a professor of philosophy and zoology at Florida

State University argues in his piece (15th March 2010) entitled ‘God is dead. Long live morality’, that “It has been said that the truth will set you free. Don’t believe it. David Hume knew the score. It doesn’t matter how much philosophical reflection can show that your beliefs and behaviour have no rational foundation, your psychology will make sure you go on living in a normal, happy manner.”

In this way he undermines any connection between the rational basis of belief and action, suggesting that our universal concept of morality is entirely an illusion, practised by us as an accident of biological history, but without any real objective foundation. Writers such as Cardinal Newman and Edward Holloway have protested this irrational fad for divorcing reason from the basic psychological dynamic of affirmative human experience. As Pope Benedict has brought out, it is this very abstract, non-relational view of intelligibility, which is at the heart of the rationalism of Ruse and many others. It leads to their vision of reason without foundation and a world without God.

Michael Reiss, an evolutionary biologist now based at the University of London’s Institute of Education, looks at the evidence of certain altruistic behaviour in the animal kingdom (19th March). He agrees that there is a background to the exercise of some altruism in the sub-human natural world which can be explained in a Darwinian sense of benefit to the individual or to a group or individuals. However, the fullness of what we experience in the human race, “not only the occasional rare and truly selfless individuals that there are, but the thousand small, routine acts of kindness that enable every society to run reasonably smoothly”, simply cannot, be based solely on the human genetic make-up. He describes the move from merely reciprocal altruism in the animal world to the genuinely human exercise of morality as “the process begin[ning] to run ahead of itself.” Another sign we would note of the non-material, spiritual soul.



Letters to the Editor

The Editor, St. Mary Magdalen's Clergy House, Peter Avenue,
Willesden Green, London NW10 2DD editor@faith.org.uk

CONTEXTUALISING THE IRISH CRISIS

Dear Father Editor,

In his comment "Horror and Hope" William Oddie writes of the "seemingly never ending story of the worldwide pandemic of paedophile scandals among Catholic clergy, and the apparently universal practice of Episcopal cover-up".

There are many strands to the phenomenon of the abuse of children and young persons in our time, which is by no means limited to Catholic clergy or the Catholic Church. The term "abuse" now covers sexual contact, physical beating, deprivation of food and, in the view of some, smacking. There are tragic victims, cover-ups, false allegations, demands for money, denials by those who cannot face up to what has happened, campaigns by those who see tolerance of paedophilia as a liberal concept and by those who seek to use every anecdote, particularly of clerical abuse, to keep the story going and smear an entire group.

My experience in this field is direct and relevant and I do not accept that there is a worldwide "pandemic of paedophile scandals among the Catholic clergy" and that the abuse is "endemic". It is sixty years since I became a Catholic; five of those years were spent in schools staffed by secular priests and religious, another four in approved schools staffed by laity and with Catholic chaplains; two years were spent in a local authority approved school and thirty years in prisons and the courts as a senior probation officer. I was a member of the All Party Lords and Commons Family and Child Protection Group for twenty five years. At no time did I encounter a Catholic priest who had been convicted in a Court of Law of child abuse or any other crime or had been accused of such. The "pandemic" seems to have escaped my notice.

One conviction of abuse against a child or young person would be one too many but my attempts to gather reliable information on the number of priests convicted of crimes against children and young persons in the last thirty years have been unsuccessful. Most recently the Office of the Irish Prime Minister was unable to supply me with figures relating to Ireland and neither could the Department to which they passed my letter for answer.

Many of the allegations in question date from the 1970s and early 1980s and William Oddie is wrong to be so dismissive of the claim that the recidivist nature of sex offending was not understood. At that time there was widespread ignorance on the subject. The Catholic authorities were not alone in "denial". In the late 1970s a Home Office Minister, advised by his Civil Servants, told me there was no paedophile problem in the United Kingdom despite the evidence presented to him by a deputation of MPs. The Catholic bishops and perhaps more importantly the bureaucracy advising them did not work in a vacuum. In the 1970s an "enlightened view" circulating in Criminal Justice and Social Work circles was that to bring to Court a child or young person who had been abused and to require him or her to relive the experiences as a witness was likely to do more harm than the abuse itself.

It was a naïve and disingenuous view which appealed to the genuinely concerned, to the liberal-minded, and to libertarians then actively campaigning to sanitise paedophilia and pederasty. Paedophile Action for Liberation and The Paedophile Information Exchange had their own journals and the latter was affiliated to the respected National Council for Civil Liberties from 1975 to 1982. The Dutch Speijer Report, which advocated the abolition of legislation against homosexual activity with minors, was translated into English and provided for the Paedophile Information Exchange by the Albany Trust which was subsidised by the Department of Education and Science. The Trust's "Youth and Sexuality Project" was prepared to consider paedophilia as "one shade of the spectrum of human sexuality". In June 1977 Lord Stamp told an incredulous

House of Lords that the Criminal Law Revision Committee had received a submission from the Paedophile Information Exchange proposing four years as acceptable as the age of consent. In 1983 a chairman of the Campaign for Homosexual Equality described paedophiles as "a group oppressed by prejudice, violence, ignorance, biased law making and the denial of basic civil rights".

When I brought my concerns about campaigns to sanitise the abuse of children and young persons to a group of MPs I was met with shock and denial. Those of us who challenged the paedophile movement and its supporters were dismissed and derided as illiberal and reactionary. This was the climate in which the Church and its agencies and others working with the young had to function. This is not to excuse them. Only with the onset of the Thatcher era did things become easier for those of us who opposed the drift. By then the damage had been done. The resolve of many had been undermined and perpetrators of abuse thought they had been given a green light. Some of those who allowed their names to be associated with what was seen as a liberal-minded approach went on to hold office in the post 1997 Labour Government.

The Catholic Church, unlike extremists on the liberal and libertarian left, has never wavered in its teaching that abuse of any child or young person is evil. A fractional minority of clergy have been proved to have fallen miserably below the standard set. Even so one case of abuse is one too many. Some bishops and those advising them, like many in the secular world, sought to deny the problem; a few with a twisted logic sought to protect the good name of the Church by buying the silence of victims. None promoted paedophilia or pederasty or presented it as anything but evil in sharp contrast to the liberal elite who campaigned relentlessly in the 1970s for the abolition of the age of consent and presented paedophiles as "gentle, fond of children and benevolent".

In my experience some who are making this what William Oddie calls "a never ending story" are seeking justice and they deserve support; others are using the misdemeanours of a seemingly fractional number of clergy to discredit the Church

“The liberal elite campaigned relentlessly in the 1970s for the abolition of the age of consent”.

and the priesthood. Such a campaign in Germany in the 1930s is well documented in John Frain’s new book “The Cross and the Third Reich”.

Yours faithfully
Kenneth H Kavanagh
Byron Crescent
Bedford

EDITORIAL COMMENT

On p.35 we point out that Peter Tatchell was given pulpits by *The Guardian* and the BBC to argue for the abolition of any fixed age of consent. And this position is *not* without a certain coherence for a vision of sex separated from procreation and concupiscence – see Fr Cummings’ article.

IMPROVING SCIENCE AND RELIGION COVERAGE

Dear Father Editor,

Thank you for printing the two wonderful articles – one on celibate love and the other on the feminine (March 10).

It’s taken me a while out here in the “wild west” of Idaho to even know of the London Debate (January 10). Alas, I am somewhat aware of these atheists against whom, I’m afraid, no rational argument would do any good. Just the attempt is reminding me of N.T. Wright’s *Evil And The Justice Of God*.

Thanks for that clear articulation of what faces us Catholics. However, have you and your editorial board considered a more focussed effort to write of the interface of science with faith? Please allow me to be blunt, but even my believing daughter and her husband who teaches physics, for whom I got this subscription, are relatively uninterested in the articles.

In other words, what a gift it would be if believing folks could look to your magazine as proof of the inclusion of science in the Catholic vision. Catholics are hungry for this kind of thought so that the other end of the spectrum, the atheists, don’t capture the day. There would be no need to apologise for this approach and your magazine could forge this weak link into the much stronger one that some of us suppose it to be.

Otherwise it might seem that the true

power of God in the Universe (not the “expanding force” that Teilhard de Chardin intuited) is to be guarded rather than accepted in a faith-filled way.

Yours faithfully
Jane Vitale
Pocatello
Idaho
USA

EDITORIAL COMMENT

It’s good to be reminded to be more focussed. The relationship of science and religion is our central focus and *raison d’être*. Most pieces we publish, especially our editorials, if not explicitly and directly, are still attempting to support the vision of Christ as the fulfilment of Creation. In the “London Debate” issue the editorial, the articles by Dominic Rolls and Dylan James articles, and the Cutting Edge, Road from Regensburg and Notes from across the Atlantic columns were, we think, profoundly relevant to this. We don’t of course claim to be the last word on the matter, and we are surely in need of improvement.

We do not agree that arguing with atheists is a fruitless activity. People have been changed through sound apologetics (e.g. C.S. Lewis, Anthony Flew), but even if we do not win the main protagonists over, it is vital that those listening to such debates hear rational answers to questions and objections raised – especially about the existence of God. Whilst we respect much of what Teilhard was trying to do we do not accept his concept of Christogenesis, and do indeed want to help people to see the truly transcendent power of God shining through his creation as well as his supernatural revelation.

FOSSIL EVIDENCE DOES NOT SUPPORT EVOLUTION

Dear Father Editor,

In “Cutting Edge” (Jan/Feb) there is a perfect example of the arrogance and complacency of certain scientists. The great fact that drives a coach and horses through the theory of evolution, the lack of fossil (or skeletal) evidence for it, is here described dismissively as “one of the arguments against”. But this

“argument” will continue to haunt the great theory until the end of time. Until a convincing fossil of a creature intermediate between species is found (under the Antarctic ice sheet perhaps?) the great void where such fossils, and billions of them at that should be, will remain a perpetual thorn in the flesh for evolutionists.

The author points out that certain conditions are necessary for fossil formation and that these are rare. In the billions of years timescale of the evolutionists I suggest that these precise conditions were, if not frequent, numerous enough to produce a fair number of fossils of all kinds including intermediates.

During this vast period intermediate creatures would have been dying daily as is normal in nature. Where are their remains? In the great “fossil graveyards” of Siberia *all* the skeletons are of perfected forms.

The remains of three animals are then trotted out and, with an air of serene papal infallibility, are declared to be “intermediates” and supportive of the theory. Only three in 160 years and of debatable authenticity at that!

A feathered dinosaur is by no means half way to being a bird and feathers are not the only thing that need to evolve; there have to be lighter bones and warmer blood. The thought of certain dinosaurs running into the wind in an attempt to take off and, after several million years, succeeding like the Wright brothers in flying a few yards, is a fantasy that sufficiently points up the absurdity of evolution. God can do things quicker and more efficiently than this.

If a duck billed platypus is demonstrably not evolving, why not a feathery one-off dinosaur or a ditto half-necked giraffe?

Evolutionists are here guilty of the ultimate scientific sin – arranging evidence to fit a theory. In a rationalistic age that wants God out of the way, evolution is now a necessary dogma. Atheistic communists have made it a central plank in their education system.

Yours faithfully
James Allen
Seymour Drive
Torquay



Letters to the Editor continued

EDITORIAL COMMENT

The theory of evolution by natural selection alone is indeed discredited. The natural processes, relationships and patterns of the wider, relatively stable, environment are also essential.

We believe that the “efficiency” and wonder of God’s work is shown by the unity of principle behind the whole of the cosmic environment, the unity of the *uni*-verse itself.

God’s necessary immediate power is no less fundamental to the mutational relationship of one pattern of bodily organisation to another than it is to the relationship of one moment of time to another, or of a leaf to the branch or the ground upon which it falls. It is all wonderful, it is all lawful and explained through intelligible patterns, which all feed into the one unity of the universe.

A priori we cannot say how many missing links there really are in our fossil record. Moreover we don’t know in detail how much structured change occurred when particular species mutated. But when we do find an “intermediate” fossil it gives us a little more information in these regards.

Everything in the universe moves from one state to another. This is all under the wonderful design of God. However relatively more or less dramatic certain changes may appear to us relative to each other.

TOWARDS A DIAGNOSIS OF RECENT DECADES

Dear Father Editor,

Towards the end of his life the philosopher Jacques Maritain took a closer look at the effects of the Council. On the surface these appeared to be good. There was a revival of interest in the things of the Spirit and a searching for renewed ways of loving Christ and one’s fellow man.

But he also saw an undercurrent of a new kind of “apostasy” among Catholic thinkers. It was ascribed to the Spirit of the Council. Maritain described it as a kind of “kneeling before the world”; and with his gentle, sardonic humour he describes what he means.

“Have you ever seen a scientist genuflecting to the world (unless he

is more of an apologist in disguise than a scientist)?” It was clear to him that there were Catholics, including Catholic thinkers, whose main concern was with the temporal tasks of “justice, peace and happiness.” But they did not realise that because of the wounds of Adam and because our ultimate end is supernatural, earthly goals cannot be the supreme end of humanity. To see otherwise is a refusal to see the world in the light of that other world which Christ opened for us, namely, the kingdom of God. Maritain calls this refusal the “Insane Mistake” (*Peasant of the Garonne*).

Just as Christ said that the world hated him and that if anyone loves the world the love of the Father is not in him, so Maritain realised that the world cannot be saved except by “sanctity and sanity”. These two words he considered to be synonymous.

Yours faithfully
Monica King
Yeading Lane
Hayes
London



The Truth Will Set You Free

Pro-Life Education for Children

By Antonia Tully – Mother of six school-age children and co-ordinator of SPUC’s Safe at School campaign.

During a BBC Breakfast interview last year, the first point put to me was, “You are against sex education, aren’t you?” To which I answered, “No”. I’m not, of course, against children and young people learning about their sexuality. The real issues are what they are taught, by whom and where. My opposition is to explicit sex education, delivered in the classroom. I am wholeheartedly in favour of initiatives which support parents in teaching their own children about puberty, at home and in the way they feel is most appropriate. “This is my body”, a new sex and relationships education (SRE) programme for Catholic schools, does exactly this.

“This is my body” comprises twelve lessons for children aged 10-11, in their last year of primary school. Published by Philos Educational Publishing, it was developed in association with the Education Service of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Lancaster

and it is the official SRE programme for Catholic schools in that diocese. “This is my body” is markedly different from other SRE programmes for primary schools, including those which have been written for Catholic schools. There is no delivery of sexual information in the classroom, in line with the Catholic church which teaches that: “The role of parents in education is of such importance that it is almost impossible to find an adequate substitute.” The programme is structured so that relationships are taught by the teacher in the classroom and puberty is covered by the child’s parents at home.

This approach is a far cry from what the Government wants. The latest draft guidance on SRE from the Department for Children Schools and Families includes these questions to help children aged 7-11 to explore SRE: “What is the normal variation in our bodies – before and after puberty?” “How is puberty part of my sexual development (including production of egg/sperm)?” “How does (sic) the sperm and egg meet during sexual intercourse and can conception be prevented?”

“Government style SRE breaks down a young child’s natural reserve”

Government-style SRE breaks down a young child’s natural reserve in connection with sexual matters, and can lead to early sexualisation. There is no such fear, however, for children attending schools which are using “This is my body”. These schools are complying with government requirements (at the time of writing, see Eric Hester’s “Sex Education or Chastity Education: Church Teaching and Civil Law”, in *Faith*, July 2007) to teach SRE, at the same time as upholding their Catholic ethos and protecting children from premature details about sex.

So what is different about “This is my body”? Relationships education in “This is my body”, starts with the child’s relationship with God. A right relationship with God is the basis for all successful human relationships. Love and forgiveness are two major themes in the programme. That God always loves us and always forgives us make it possible for us to have a relationship with Him. Love and forgiveness make it possible for us to have relationships with each other, within marriage and the family and in our wider relationships with others. The family and marriage are presented to the children as a special design by God for human beings to make them happy.

The children’s sense of self-esteem is developed by focusing on the fact that they are children of God. They are taught that God has a plan for each of them and this encourages them to think of their future and what calling may be theirs.

“Only we, as Matthew’s parents, are in a position to give him the right information about his sexual development at the right time”

At the heart of “This is my body” is a clear pro-life message about unborn babies. The children are taught that human beings are the most beautiful part of God’s creation; and that nowhere is this more evident than in the beauty of the baby in the womb. The children explore this through different activities, including conducting a questionnaire with their mothers to find out about their own life in the womb; did they kick a lot etc. They look up references in a booklet called “Human Life: the First Wonder!” The lessons on life before birth culminate with the children handling tactile foetal models, which are the average weight of pre-born babies of 12, 20, 26 and 30 weeks after conception. Both girls and boys love this experience, and I’m convinced this will leave them with a lifelong understanding of the humanity of the baby before birth.

During the media interviews I took part in last November when the Government announced the Children, Schools and Families Bill, my position was repeatedly attacked on the basis that parents don’t like talking to their children about sex, so schools must. My response, then and now, is that the majority of parents are able to talk about puberty to their children.

“This is my body” supports parents in talking to their children about puberty and does this in a very practical way. After each lesson the children have a home link activity so that parents are able to follow the programme with their children. During the course of the programme, the school writes to the parents

suggesting that this might be a good time to talk about puberty to their son or daughter. There are special leaflets to encourage parents to do this and give them ideas about how to frame such a conversation.

“This is my body” aims to give parents the confidence to fulfil their role here as the primary educator of their children. It’s not always easy for parents to talk about sex to their children. A recent experience in my own family is a case in point. My valiant husband, Paul, took aside our 11-year-old son, Matthew, to talk about puberty. We have been lucky that our children’s primary school delivers no SRE. Paul struggled on for about 20 minutes, watching Matthew carefully to gauge his response. Eventually Matthew said, “That’s interesting. Can I ask you a question?” “Yes, of course,” replied Paul, eager to engage with his child. “Dad,” said Matthew, “Why are you wearing that T-shirt?” At this point Paul decided to end the chat.

At the time we were tempted to wonder whether talking to Matthew was worth the effort. But actually we knew it was, and that we would have failed him if we had neglected this. Critically, it was Paul who spoke to his son, emphasising that sexuality is a private matter. He was also giving Matthew the message that he should go to his dad with any questions or concerns. Matthew, of course, was not interested in his father’s T-shirt. He was really saying, “Ok you’ve told me and I don’t have anything to say.” I don’t consider that an abnormal reaction from a normal boy whose horizons don’t stretch much beyond doing as little homework as possible and playing computerised football games. Only we, as Matthew’s parents, are in a position to give him the right information about his sexual development at the right time.

““This is my body’ supports parents in talking to their children about puberty”

But let’s be clear, the Government’s real agenda is not that children and young people receive information about puberty and sex. The Government wants to make sure that every child knows how to access and use contraceptives and abortion referral agencies. This was made quite clear by Ed Balls, minister for Children Schools and Families when he said on 23 February 2010, “A Catholic faith school can say to their pupils we believe as a religion contraception is wrong but what they can’t do is therefore say that they are not going to teach them about contraception to children, how to access contraception or how to use contraception.”

We can’t be so naïve as to think that the only threat to a child’s natural innocence is unethical and inappropriate sex education at school. There are lots of things contributing to the sexualisation of children, television, the internet, magazines and fashion. But we ignore what is happening in the classroom at our peril.

“This is my body” is a triumph of the culture of life over the prevailing evil of anti-life sex education. It is a life-enhancing and enriching programme. It truly protects the dignity and integrity of children. It will change lives and save lives.



Comment on the Comments

by William Oddie

The White Flag of Silence

Did we witness, only weeks away from the General Election, one of the greatest betrayals of the Catholic tradition by the English hierarchy, not merely in this century (of which after all there hasn't been much yet) but in the history of the Church? If that seems a little hysterical, consider *The Catholic Herald's* account of an interview given by Ed Balls on the *Today* programme, a few hours before the House of Commons passed, by 268 votes to 177, its Sex Education Bill (against which, Catholics should note, the Tories voted):

On Tuesday morning Ed Balls gave an interview to BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme in which he again insisted that the amendment [i.e. that negotiated by the Catholic Education Service] did not "water down" the Bill.

He said: "If you are currently a Catholic school... you could choose to teach only to children that contraception is wrong, homosexuality is wrong. That changes radically with this Bill.

"A Catholic faith school can say to their pupils: 'We believe as a religion contraception is wrong.' But what they can't do is therefore say that they are not going to teach contraception to children, how to access contraception, or how to use contraception. What this changes is that for the first time these schools cannot just ignore these issues or teach only one side of the argument.

"They also have to teach that there are different views on homosexuality. They cannot teach homophobia. They must explain civil partnerships. They must give a balanced view on abortion. They must give both sides of the argument. *They must explain how to access an abortion.* [My emphasis] The same is true on contraception as well."

He added: "To have the support of the Catholic Church and Archbishop Nichol [sic] in these changes is, I think, very, very important, is a huge step forward."

The Catholic Education Service – surprisingly only to those without any knowledge of their exceptionally dodgy track record – as the *Herald* recorded, "hailed an amendment to the Bill that it said it had secured after 'extensive lobbying'." A mixture of naivety and deeply-engrained sixties liberalism is probably the explanation of how the CES could "hail" as a victory rather than an ignominious defeat for the Catholic cause an amendment allowing Catholic schools to teach the Catholic view as well as the Labour secularist pro-abortion and pro-gay compulsory agenda. For, let there be no doubt. This was a crushing defeat, whatever the ultimate fate of Balls's legislation. We have been forced to witness the authorities of the church, led by the Archbishop of Westminster himself, actually celebrating the secularist relativism – according to which the Catholic view is not the God-given truth but simply one view among many – which Pope Benedict has so eloquently and repeatedly condemned. To argue that the CES compromise was at least better than not to be allowed even to teach the Catholic view on these matters is nonsense. For at least, then, we would have known where we stood. Catholic schools, told they were not allowed to teach the Catholic view, would have known that they could only disobey. But now that the authorities of the Catholic church have made it clear that if a Catholic school did disobey such a law, *their bishops would not support them* they do not have a leg to stand on.

It was already becoming clear that actual support for the Bill would be the official (though cravenly unexpressed) Catholic line, even before the Bill was voted through the Commons. How was this made clear? Why, by the (I hope, literally) shameful silence of those concerned. As Damian Thompson asked in his *Telegraph* blog, "where was the Catholic spokesman to put the Church's side of the story?":

"Archbishop Nichols": not available.

Bishop Malcolm McMahon, who holds the education brief in the Bishops' Conference: not available.

Oona Stannard, head of the Catholic Education Service (CES): not available.

There is a conspiracy theory [alas, it proved no mere theory] doing the rounds that the CES and other Church spokesmen are deliberately lying low, in order to help Balls get his amendment through. But the amendment is worthless. In its final weeks, this dying government is forcing Catholic schools to provide information on how girls can kill the babies in their womb; it is boasting about how St Thomas More School in Bedford is already providing "non-judgmental" information about abortions. And the reaction from the Church, and the head teacher of the school in question?

Silence.

The example of St Thomas More, Bedford, is a chilling one, for the Department "for" Children, Schools and Families presented it as the exemplar of what all Catholic schools will now be forced to become if Labour has its way. This is what Balls's DCSF had to say about it:

The school has developed a very successful balance of providing students with accurate information within the faith ethos of the school. For example, sex within marriage is promoted as the ideal of the Catholic faith, but the school explicitly recognises the reality that some young people may choose to be sexually active and, if that is the case, they need the knowledge and confidence to make an informed choice to protect themselves from pregnancy and STIs.

The school nurse provides students with clear accurate information about the full range of contraception and STIs and details of local services.... By combining the pastoral and RE

teaching, the essential knowledge component of SRE is provided to students but within the school’s values.

One is tempted to ask what values precisely those might be: not exactly, it would seem, Catholic values. And of course, as we all know, St Thomas More, Bedford (the irony of whose name serves to highlight its supine betrayal) is hardly untypical. As Fr Finigan commented in his blog *The Hermeneutic of Continuity*, “the model as given is, sadly, not surprising”:

Many Catholics today regard the Church’s teaching as only an “ideal”, and accept that young people, some of whom will have “chosen to be sexually active” must be taught about contraception to avoid pregnancy and STIs. Such Catholics think that contraception will achieve these goals because that is what the propaganda tells them....

Most teenage pregnancies result from contraceptive failure. And as Fr Finigan chillingly continues:

Faced with a “contraceptive failure” in the form of an inexorably developing human embryo, the average liberal Catholic will want to be “non-judgmental”. This is actually a cowardly get-out. It means that you don’t have to risk the professional consequences of saying that you really think that abortion might be the most sensible thing – you present the range of options and then leave a poor, frightened 16 year old girl to make her own choice from among the “spectrum of views”. When she has come to the conclusion, against all her natural instincts, that abortion is the only way out of the mess she is in, you can feel terribly virtuous because you haven’t been dogmatic.

The Tablet (an old enemy of Fr Finigan) naturally supported the CES in all this, noting in shocked tones that “The Catholic Education Service... is being denounced from the Catholic Right for having any truck at all with Mr Balls’ proposals, with or without his concessions to faith schools.” Such criticism, says the Bitter Pill, “may be misdirected”. The danger, says the

paper, predictably, “is not sex education as such, but sex education without moral content – that is to say, without putting it in the context of loving relationships and the Church’s teaching”. But “loving relationships” and “the Church’s teaching” are not, according to what Mr Balls had got the CES to agree to, at all the same thing. What the CES now means by “loving relationships” is “the reality that some young people may choose to be sexually active”. “Catholic schools” says *The Tablet* “will have to steer a careful course. They should be trusted to get on with it.” But what *The Tablet* undoubtedly means by “Catholic Schools” who can “be trusted to get on with it” is Catholic schools like St Thomas More, Bedford.

This inevitably brings one back, yet again, to an increasingly depressing subject: the state of our Catholic Schools. For, the simple fact is that, more and more, St Thomas More, Bedford is ceasing to be the exception rather than the rule. Perhaps prompted by the CES’s complicity in the Balls Bill, Father Aidan Nichols O.P. wrote an article for *The Catholic Herald* headlined “My radical proposal for saving Catholic education”. The question, he wrote, “is what use to the Church, as distinct from civil society, the Catholic school network, above all in the state sector, can be said to be at the present time”:

There is no difficulty in defending the record of our schools in terms of the moral and civic values they encourage, nor... their academic quality. My question concerns, rather, their contribution to forming the next generation of, precisely, believing and practising Catholics... It is simply not possible... either now or in the currently foreseeable future, to expect vocationally committed Catholic teachers to be forthcoming on the scale required – notably in religious education, but not only there.

Father Nichols’ suggestion was that we ought to “for the sake of making the best use of our resources, radically to reduce the number of our schools in the state sector, so as to concentrate on

deepening the Catholicity of a realistic number”. This drew an answer from the redoubtable Mrs Daphne McLeod, of the ginger group *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice*, who suggested that we should, rather,

...look at dioceses in America and Australia where bishops have addressed this problem so successfully they now have full seminaries and churches packed with young people in stable marriages living good Catholic lives.

What these bishops did was to remove the totally inadequate religious text-books and the advisers/inspectors who wrote and promoted them and provide the teachers with sound Catholic text-books which were not only faithful to the Catechism of the Catholic Church but which also taught the faith clearly, comprehensively and without any ambiguity.

Mrs McLeod knows what she is talking about, having successfully done precisely that as a headmistress. The bishops have attempted to marginalise her over the years by branding her as a tiresome extremist, but she is listened to in Rome, where her information about the dubious activities of some of our bishops is carefully noted; I have no doubt that the recent *ad limina* visit of our Bishops’ Conference was as a result less comfortable for some than it might otherwise have been. And as far as the officially produced school text-books our hierarchy has provided, most notoriously (but by no means uniquely) the appalling *Weaving the Web*, she is now as she has been for decades past, absolutely spot on. But it may now be too late. Her vision depends on having bishops willing to implement it. But they just aren’t there. And if nothing is done, as Eric Hester (another former head teacher) has predicted in these columns [in the November issue of 2006], “then in as little as five years, outside the independent sector, there could be no truly Catholic schools remaining in England.” So Ed Balls and his ilk will have won, whatever his political future has turned out to be by the time these words appear.



Book Reviews

Christian Ethics and the Human Person: Truth and Relativism in Contemporary Moral Theology

by Peter Bristow, *Family Publications & Maryvale Institute*, 384 pp, £18.95

In 1990, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith published guidance on the relationship between theologians and the Magisterium in its *Instruction on the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian*. The CDF called on theologians to function “in communion with the Magisterium, which has been charged with the responsibility of preserving the deposit of faith” (6), and to offer the People of God “a teaching which in no way does harm to the doctrine of the faith” (11). These guidelines have proved controversial, not least among moral theologians. James Keenan and Peter Black, for example, have criticised those who “look more for consistency with previous teachings than to the critical tradition itself” (*Studia Moralia* 2001, p.326), describing them as “colleagues who have left our enterprise” (*ibid.*). Contrastingly, Peter Bristow’s analysis of postconciliar moral thought in *Christian Ethics and the Human Person* exemplifies the theologian’s responsibility to gain “an ever deeper understanding of the Word of God ... handed on faithfully by the Church’s living Tradition under the guidance of the Magisterium” (CDF 1990, no. 21). By following this method, Bristow has produced a study which is both commendable in its manner of doing theology and perceptive in its evaluation of contemporary ethical stances.

A notable achievement of the book is to discern the crucial role played by conflicting views of the human person in determining attitudes to a wide range of ethical questions. The basic antithesis is between the person as a unified subject consisting of body and soul, and a post-Cartesian view which holds that the mind can be asserted over against the truth about man, that truth being revealed in and through the body and illuminated by reason. Bristow demonstrates consistently that the former view underlies the teaching of the Church and of those theologians who cooperate with it constructively, and that the latter is the source of much dissent and of the relativism which undermines the truth about man. This is a *leitmotif* found in numerous chapters, including those on Natural Law, moral revisionism and *Humanae Vitae*. In the case of Paul VI’s encyclical, Bristow points out that a true appreciation of the conjugal act “depends on the understanding that the human person is a unity of body and spirit, so that where the body acts the spirit is also present and vice versa” (p. 346). That is precisely what the advocates of mind-body dualism fail to see. They do not see that the contraceptive act results in “a bodily union, but not a fully personal one, in the sense that the whole person is not being given to the other” (*ibid.*). The body may be given, but the full commitment of openness to fecundity is withheld. We thus have a false language of the body, as John Paul II would put it.

Bristow’s linking of *Humanae Vitae* and John Paul II’s Theology of the Body highlights another important contribution of this book, namely the sense it gives of a living, organic continuity in the moral teaching of the Church. Defenders of *Humanae Vitae* have long pointed out that it is consistent with traditional doctrine, and as such is an instrument of communion with those who have gone before us. Though true, this presents *Humanae Vitae* as a terminus from which we look back. Bristow also sees the encyclical as a salient contribution which itself is

capable of being unpacked and enriched by thinkers of subsequent generations who share Paul VI’s commitment to authentic Magisterium. John Paul II’s Theology of the Body provides such an enrichment, as Bristow makes clear in his comments on what remained to be clarified about the mystery of spousal love in the wake of *Humanae Vitae*: “A fuller ... and deeper treatment was needed, and this was forthcoming in the ‘theology of the body’ at the beginning of John Paul II’s pontificate” (p. 337). Bristow’s chapter on the Theology of the Body provides an admirable summary of this fuller and deeper treatment.

Such weaknesses as there are in *Christian Ethics and the Human Person* do not detract noticeably from its overall effectiveness. Chapter 4, which is devoted to “Contemporary Personalism”, could benefit from a simpler or more streamlined presentation of what is essentially a solid argument. And some terms (such as “Natural Law”) are used a number of times before being fully defined, although the definitions are illuminating when they are given. Such minor caveats apart, Bristow has managed to point contemporary Catholic ethics in a convincing direction, one which is truly in and of the Church. As such his book is warmly to be recommended.

David Potter

Aintree
Liverpool

Fires of Faith, Catholic England Under Mary Tudor

by Eamon Duffy, *Yale University Press*, 249 pp, £19.99

Eamon Duffy is continuing his task of redressing the Whig slant on Tudor history and turns his attention to Mary Tudor. Surely, it would seem quite impossible to reinstate *Bloody Mary*...

Duffy not only takes issue with G R Elton and J E Neale but also with John Bossy whom he says belittles the achievements of Mary and Cardinal Pole. Between them they inaugurated the Counter

“This book is essential reading for anyone seriously considering how we live out our priesthood.”

Reformation structures. Diocesan Schools (= seminaries) were set up in York, Lincoln, Wells and Durham. Pole had in mind the conversion of the English hospice in Rome into a seminary. Because preaching had become “rather an empty ear-tickling entertainment, rather than a health-giving discipline”, a series of set-piece sermons were preached every Sunday (20,000 attended one such with 25 out of 26 London aldermen) to undo “corrupt and naughty opinions.” This was accompanied by Bishop Bonner’s *Homilies and his Catechism for Children* and Watson’s *Holsome and Catholyke Doc trine Concernyng the Seven Sacraments* which advocated frequent Communion, “He that came not thrice a year should not be taken as a Catholic man.” It was expected that everyone should go to Confession to their own priest at least twice in Lent. The general level of theology was of a high standard, with orthodox and learned university dons being promoted to the episcopate. This can be gauged by the fact that only Kitchin of Llandaff conformed to Elizabeth, the rest preferring exile, or in the case of the Master of Pembroke, twenty-two years imprisonment in Wisbech castle.

Mary was not the blood-stained ogress of Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* (‘Book of Martyrs’). She was quite serious when she said that she “meant graciously not to compel or constrain other men’s consciences.” Priests who had married were not peremptorily dismissed but told to keep their concubines out of men’s sight. Robert Parsons would express his dismay but if that policy of retaining existing structures had been followed in Iraq we would have avoided much bloodshed! Strenuous efforts were put into converting people from their heresy. Bishop Bonner urged the apprentice William Hunter “to speak the word here between me and thee” and all charges would be dropped. Duffy cannot dismiss the fact that 284 people were burnt at the stake and this included 11 men and 2 women at one time in Stratford Le Bow. England was not

unique in this as 270 were burnt in the Spanish Netherlands. But we cannot put modern concepts of equal rights into Tudor times. Heresy was regarded in Christian Europe akin to idolatry and a threat to the State. John Rogers, who was later burnt himself said that the punishment was “sufficiently mild for so heinous a crime.” We have seen how people are prepared to immolate themselves for a cause, and many Protestant evangelicals were willing to make such a protest, their final statements were often as well prepared as any jihadi. The occasion was therefore used by preachers to urge the people present “both to understand the truth and beware to do the like.” The threat of the physical and spiritual fire had an increasing effect according to Duffy together with the concentrated catechesis and renewal of Catholic practice.

If Mary and Cardinal Pole had not both died in 1558, it is likely that England would have been in the forefront of the Counter Reformation – not withstanding the fires of Smithfield.

James Tolhurst

Chislehurst
Kent

A Nun with a Difference. The Life and Letters of Sister Mary Alban FC

by Joanna Bogle, Sun Hill Publishing, 260pp, £8.88 (available at CTS Bookshop at Westminster Cathedral & Brompton Oratory Bookshop)

Nuns are wonderful people and it is a vocation which I would certainly promote in our youth group but as a married woman I often find I do not identify with the lives of these good people. I was intrigued, what was so different about this nun?

It was with great enjoyment that I read this book. Its layout lends itself to easy reading. The first part talks of the life of Sister Mary Alban, a woman who managed to fulfil her vocation whilst also giving herself to the education of children. Reading how Sister Alban was able to persevere through many trials

and personal health difficulties makes her a person that many people will relate to. After offering an insight into her life the rest of the book is composed of letters which she had written to her family members. Again one feels drawn into wanting to know more about how Sister Alban coped with the various situations, and I found myself encouraged by her words as if some of the letters were written to me personally.

It was interesting to learn about her work in Catholic schools in India. There was great pressure from the Hindu and Muslim communities and yet she managed to maintain the Catholic nature of the school. One cannot help drawing comparisons with the struggle today to maintain Catholic faith schools in our own country.

I enjoyed the reflection on her sister Dorothy. It is a reminder of the difficult nature of determining a vocation. Dorothy thought she was called to the vocation of religious life but then realised she was not. It is beautiful to see how Sister Alban encouraged her on the path to her true vocation of marriage. Today there is so much pressure to make the right decision and please people rather than discern God’s will. Here is encouragement and support when reading about this area in these women’s lives.

This book reminds the reader that busy lives are compatible with calm and prayer. I suspect it is through constant prayer that Sister Alban was able to find the strength and guidance she needed to undertake the many tasks she carried out. We are all reminded, single and married, old and young, of the importance of making God the centre of our lives. If we are wholly open to him he will use us to achieve great things be it spending ten years in India fighting to build and keep Catholic schools or bringing up one’s own children to know Christ.

Ella Preece

Hull



Vita Communis : The Common Life of the Secular Clergy,

by *Jerome Bertram, Cong Orat, Gracewing, 316pp, £15.99*

In this Year of the Priest the model of the Curé of Ars is set before priests. We learn much from his sanctity and pastoral zeal, but to what extent is the framework in which he exercised his priesthood, that of the single priest in the autonomous parish, relevant or helpful today? Is a structure appropriate for nineteenth-century rural France right for twenty-first century urban Britain? Is it good that we are expected to be jacks of all trades, sole operators, more or less isolated, faced by the pressures of secularisation, bureaucracy and falling vocations?

Fr Bertram maintains convincingly that this model is, in fact, a historical aberration, not the norm for living out secular priesthood until the upheavals of the French Revolution. It is no surprise that the author is an Oratorian, whose community is a rare survivor of a different way of doing things.

From the beginning there was an expectation that the secular clergy would live a common life, remaining distinct from the religious by retaining (some) private property and not taking vows. The objective was neither the pastoral good of the people nor the psychological welfare of the priest, but the observation of the evangelical precepts of poverty and chastity. (Modern sensibilities might balk at the early practice of common dormitories!)

The size, purpose and foundation of these clerical colleges varied hugely, yet they were the norm in pre-Reformation Europe, continuing to flourish in Catholic lands until the Revolution. All had some educational and pastoral aspect, yet their function was primarily cultic: they existed to offer the Mass and the Divine Office for the spiritual good of their founders and of the realm.

Fr Bertram is realistic. This form of clerical living was imperfect. There were conflicts with bishops, lay patrons and

neighbouring religious. Colleges could tend to one of two extremes: evolving into full-blown religious communities with vows and a prohibition on private property, or degenerating into gentlemen's clubs with a non-resident membership. However, they were always capable of reform and held a secure place in lay affection to the end because, on the whole, they continued to function for the purpose for which they were founded.

Why did a once prevalent institution disappear? College endowments proved easy pickings for the sixteenth-century Crown and lay 'reformers'. (In England they survived, shorn of their religious *raison d'être*, only at Oxbridge and in our ancient public schools.) Trent inadvertently cut off the colleges' principal source of recruitment. Previously, colleges ran schools where some boys stayed on as collegiate clergy. With Trent's innovations, the path for most clergy increasingly led straight from seminary to presbytery, becoming quasi-servants to the parish priest, with none of the rights and privileges accorded by collegiate statutes. Not a healthy situation, as Fr Bertram observes. Nevertheless, significant communities continued to be founded, most notably the Oratorians and Sulpicians. It was the Enlightenment rejection of the supernatural which sounded their death knell. Both nineteenth-century secularisation and ecclesiastical reform emphasised centralisation on the nation or Rome to the detriment of local colleges. Finally, the 1917 Code of Canon Law removed the right of self-government, allowing the bishop to appoint to all offices, abrogating existing privileges. A college can only function if it has the right to select its own members of priests sharing a common vision. Fr Bertram is not recommending parish 'clustering'.

The common life of the secular clergy seemed a footnote in Church history until the 1983 Code legislated for Societies of Apostolic Life – of pontifical or diocesan right – with real autonomy. Secular clergy can once again live in

common, largely free from outside interference, with the right to select and form their own members. Fr Bertram makes the obvious point that they must not be seen simply as a refuge for those fleeing episcopal jurisdiction. Instead, they offer a flexible framework to cover all manner of charisms and pastoral situations. Recent scandals indicate one advantage of the common life while Pope Benedict's "hermeneutic of continuity" encourages us to look to the past for solutions to current problems. Fr Bertram concludes by offering models and suggestions as to how such societies might work in practice.

This book is essential reading for anyone seriously considering how we live out our priesthood. Perhaps we learn a little more than absolutely necessary about the foundations and rules of the Carolingian Empire, but otherwise the book is also an excellent, and possibly unique, comprehensive history of the secular clergy.

Mark Vickers

St Peter's
Hatfield

Notes From Across the Atlantic

by Joseph Bottum



LOSS OF IDENTITY

In 1998 James Burtchaell published *The Dying of the Light*, his detailed study of how a number of once Christian colleges and universities had gradually lost (or, sadly, eagerly relinquished) their distinctively Christian identity. Valparaiso University was not among the three Lutheran colleges examined by Burtchaell but, clearly, Valpo is making an effort to qualify for an updated revision. Case in point: a recent report from a task force charged to recommend changes in the university's opening convocation. "To reinforce the VU spirit and to be more inclusive for the increasingly diverse student body, the community should sing the Valparaiso Alma Mater in lieu of the Valparaiso Hymn." Themes of "welcoming" and "hospitality" should be central to the convocation. (In passing, doesn't the word *hospitality* win the prize for most overused word in recent years?) The convocation should avoid Scripture readings linked to the historic lectionary and should use instead "a reading in keeping with the spirit of the convocation or in harmony with academic or campus wide themes". We're not quite sure what this means, but we're pretty sure they won't be reading Galatians 1:6-9. In general, care is required to "avoid the kind of overt religiosity that can be misperceived as exclusionary." Reading between the lines, one discerns a hidden agenda: Please don't think we're evangelicals. Nevertheless, "VU can continue to robustly celebrate its rich Lutheran/Christian tradition while remaining sensitive to the feelings of those who belong to different faith communities." Of course, as is always the case when

liberal Protestantism appears on the scene, it'll be a little hard to say what those others are being "welcomed" into. Nothing very distinctive, to be sure. But no matter. One can keep on repeating the university's motto from Psalm 36:9: "In thy light we see light." Another notch on Burtchaell's belt.

RESPONSIBLE PARENTHOOD

In *Philosophy and Public Policy Quarterly*, University of Colorado philosopher Scott Wisor takes up the question, "Is There a Moral Obligation to Limit Family Size?" Wisor's main conclusion seems unexceptionable – though some may take exception: "Although parents certainly do have obligations to consider the environmental impact of their families as producers, consumers and citizens, it is not true that individuals ought to have smaller families for strictly environmental reasons." The arguments for that are strong. Malthusian doomsday scenarios have repeatedly turned out false, and the concrete evidence "suggests that in some cases, increased population sizes have actually led to increases in environmental stewardship". And then there's the curious fact that "acceptance of the argument for limiting family size might actually weaken the environmental movement". If the most environmentally concerned families end up being the smallest, the ratio of the environmentally concerned to the general population will shrink, weakening their political impact. Wisor's most satisfying argument, however, represents a sounder moral vision: "Our love for our existing family members, our love for our future children and the desire to have a large,

fun, supportive family are more morally appropriate ways to think about our future children." Wisor sets forth reasons to think so, but he shouldn't have to. That he has to at all is attributable to the same liberal orthodoxy in academia signified by other articles in the *Philosophy and Public Policy Quarterly*.

PRINCIPLES WITH LIMITS

"I suppose I should add that you are a very strong pro-life Democrat," Greta Van Susteren said to Senator Bob Casey Jr. in an interview about his support for the senate's health-care bill. Casey, naturally, replied, "No question. But I also believe . . ." One does, of course, have to balance conflicting goals and desires in the real life of politics, weighing each against each. Still, there's something about that phrase "but I also believe". In the mouth of a politician, that always signals the setting aside of a principle. And, man, did Senator Casey fling aside principle. It's not just that he voted for the health-care bill, which aimed at funding abortions. He actively worked to seduce others from their pro-life stands, and President Obama brought Casey to the White House to help him find a way for Senator Ben Nelson to allow abortion funding to pass. In the end, they succeeded – which means that there is not a single pro-life Democrat in the US Senate. Given the divided views of the American public, that's a dangerous situation for the republic, as the issue becomes the property of parties, rather than the property of principles that appear in both parties.



The Road From Regensburg

Papal-inspired dialogue in search of a new apologetic

Any case of priestly sex abuse and episcopal cover-up is especially shameful – priests are meant to reflect God the Father. We accept the role of the media in calling us to account concerning our protection and care of innocent children and their families, not least those who have been deeply wounded by those who they naturally would expect to trust the most. This has rightly involved reporting the failures of Bishops to follow wise Church, civil and common law. Furthermore we understand that a failure to be transparent concerning our administrative procedures can foster suspicion. We need repentance and renewal.

An Inconvenient Papal Diagnosis?

When a journalist of the stature of Libby Purves calls for the Pope's arrest, and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation publish a piece suggesting the Pope is akin to a "criminal mastermind" who should be treated like the Taliban we are at a significant juncture of human history. Yet the only new as well as significant information in the recent spate of priestly abuse "reports" was the revelation, horrific as it is, that the actions of some Irish prelates enabled serious child abusers to continue their crimes.

As we argue below the move that has been made from the fact of these actions, contrary to Church law and teaching as they were, to the blackening of the name of the Catholic Church is profoundly unjust. The move from a journalism with normally quite high professional standards to a sustained irrational rage is strange as well as damaging to all, not least the victims. It is made somewhat more understandable by the awful nature of *priestly* abuse, and by the fact that the same apparently objective journalists, as well as fostering some Christian values, have helped to make respectable the culture of death. It is interesting that Libby Purves' autobiography, *'Holy Smoke'*, somewhat implausibly linked her own personal lack of obedience to *Humanae Vitae* with the plight of Irish women with drunken husbands.

The mantra of "tolerance" in this brave new world is increasingly seen to be on shaky ground by its intolerance of direct challenges, for instance by the proponents of religious freedom.

The Pope *has* so challenged the very heart of European secularism. He has drawn out the contradictions of playing off one Christian value against another and pleaded for a "new humanistic synthesis" in European culture. Last autumn he said as much in separate addresses to EU and UN leaders. These addresses were highlighted in this column, as have been his numerous supporting talks since his 2006 Regensburg lecture.

The BBC expressed surprise that the Pope's *Urbi et Orbi* address did not mention the abuse crisis. It did mention the "profound crisis" of the modern world. In the Pope's moving and thought provoking "Letter of Apology" to the Irish Church, issued shortly before the calls for his arrest, he mentions the fatal "tendency during this period to adopt ways of thinking and assessing secular realities without sufficient reference to the Gospel." [n.54]. We would repeat the point made in our editorial introduction that, contrary to some critics of the Pope's letter, this is not to shift the blame elsewhere, for he recognises that Catholic thought has failed to provide the antidote to this. Indeed in para. 12 he says, "A new vision is needed to inspire future and present generations to treasure the gift of our faith."

In the final analysis, given that the pen is mightier than the sword, these utterances are the actions, that the masters of our new universe really should fear. Might they have been a catalyst for the recent media cataclysm?

The Nature of the Media Attack

There is one reason we would not put on the list of causes for the assault upon the Pope. That is that the media have uncovered a papal led conspiracy, which flows from the nature of Catholicism, to prioritise the good name of the Church over the protection of innocent children.

The media have avoided presenting the fact that child sex abuse and the mismanagement of its perpetrators is and has been a society-wide phenomenon. Rather they have been happy to suggest, – more often by subtle implication and spin than with straightforward candour – that **(i)** the priesthood is fairly riddled with abusers, **(ii)** there is an international culture of cover-up in the Church which **(iii)** goes right to the top of the Church, and **(iv)** that Catholic institutions such as celibacy and hierarchy are to blame — even that Catholic teaching of children about its sexual morality is a form of intellectual abuse of large numbers of children.

Contextualising the Media Attack

We would suggest that these latter four implications amount to ideologically-inspired calumny. If we are right then this is utterly reprehensible. It is making mileage out of the misery of those wounded by the abuse crisis.

(i) Among those convicted for child abuse in the United States and in Austria priests number 2%. The family and related authority figures are the biggest percentage group of abusers. In England and Wales over the last 40 years 0.4% of all priests have had allegations of such abuse against them. In the first national research of its kind the Irish college of Surgeons 2002 SAVI report, widely acknowledged as authoritative, found that the gigantic number of 27% of Irish under-17 year olds allege having been victims of sex abuse. 3.4 % of these allegations concerned priests or religious, the majority being by the latter in, it seems, their boys' schools.

The report of the Irish government's inquiry into the place where a significant majority of clerical abuse took place, the educational reform schools from 1914-1999, was the catalyst for this whole crisis. It made a strong, public invitation for victims to come forward. The report records 381 allegations, of which 225 were against religious workers, including priests. This is a tiny fraction of the one quarter of Irish people who reported, in 2002, having been abused over a similar period. It gives an extra degree of specification to the picture.

By far the biggest decade for the correction schools’ allegations was the 1960s. In US cases, 60% of which involved post-pubescent boys, 40% of allegations against clergy were in the years 1975-1980. Since then, in both these countries, there has been a consistent drop off.

(ii) Statistically speaking in all the recent reporting there are no new allegations. There is a greater, certainly horrific, specificity to what probably happened – there are no new convictions or admissions of abuse. The main news is of some tragically awful management, even protection, of some proven or suspected abusers. This has been made gigantic news, by the anglophone media, as if we have been and still are the main institution to have such problems. It has not been helped by slow and uncoordinated Church responses. Then on top of this have been added vicious allegations against the Pope, hyped up before the Church has had a chance to respond. The German media for instance has been a lot more responsible.

There is no question that as weakness and sin in some of our leaders come to light we need to respond, as we have over the last decade. In Ireland since 1995 all cases have been reported to authorities. Since the department of which Cardinal Ratzinger was head for two decades was given responsibility for these cases in 2001 he has acted vigorously. The Church in England and Wales through its implementation of the Nolan report over the last decade is known to be well ahead of all other institutions involving care of children in this whole area.

The evidence suggests that terrible mismanagement is widespread in society *today*. For instance a US Education department report concerning American public schools shows large scale *contemporary* abuse, with little action being taken against admitted offenders. The media seem to be averting their gaze from the society-wide, contemporary problem in favour of the small minority of historic Catholic cases.

The Church’s Canon Law has always made clear that abuse of minors is a serious sin. It stipulates penalties which, as the government report brought out, some Irish Bishops ignored with terrible consequences.

However, outside the Church, it has not always been clear in our culture that adult sex with minors is wrong, and this belief is under threat again. Prominent contemporary political figures such as Harriet Harman and Patricia Hewitt were leaders of the 1970s Civil Liberties Union which was affiliated to the Paedophile Information Exchange, which campaigned to reduce the age of consent to four years old! Furthermore Peter Tatchell was last year given pulpits by the BBC and *The Guardian* to make his case that there should be no fixed age of consent. It is worth noting again that the tragic victims in a significant proportion of all the abuse cases we are talking about were teenage boys – 60% in the US.

But perhaps more relevantly it has definitely not always been clear that paedophilia is usually a deep psychological wound that repentance and/or therapy cannot easily remove.

(iii) Ironically the US and German cases evinced against the Pope concerning abuses back in the 70s and 80s (as with the much more recent Ealing headmaster case used very prominently against Archbishop Nichols) show the Church being decades ahead of the game as they had all involved full and appropriate cooperation with civil authorities. The two US cases involved the Pope’s department respectively in the 80s and 90s when its relevant responsibility concerned confessional misuse and priestly laicisation. Concerning laicisation Pope John Paul II made the process more stringent for the good of the Church, the priest and indeed any victims of the priest.

In the 1970s case of the German priest the only evidence produced which directly involves Archbishop Ratzinger shows that he allowed the suspected priest to come into his diocese for therapy and to stay briefly at a

presbytery, but without pastoral work. Following the priest’s professional assessment he was later allowed to do such work. After Ratzinger had left the diocese, tragically he abused again. But it looks very much as if the Archbishop did not even know about his reassignment. The accusation against Archbishop Nichols suggested that his heading up the Catholic agency co-ordinating child protection procedures made him responsible for the handling of all English and Welsh paedophile priests. In fact he did not even have to know about every case outside his diocese and the Archbishop has been considering legal action against *The Times*.

Meanwhile the significant work of the Pope in making the Catholic Church one of the safest institutions for children to be involved in is ignored.

The attempts to implicate the Pope and Archbishop Nichols have shown the media at its most blatantly unprofessional and irresponsible, and suggest a deeper agenda at work. The calls to have the Pope arrested are the product of a false ideology and such journalism, as well as being irresponsible in terms of public order and impossible under British and international law.

(iv) No objective evidence has been adduced to suggest that celibacy is the problem. The implication is therefore calumnious too all who are not having sex! The linking of the cover-up with the institution ignores the fact that the mishandling explicitly ignored Church law. The claims that our teaching of the truth about sex and love is an “intellectual abuse” are in one sense the extreme of the attacks. From another point of view they would seem to be a key motivation behind the unprofessional nature of the frenzied accusations, amidst what, in its foundations at least, was reasonable reporting about real Church failures.

Over the page we give a detailed exposition of a prominent case used against Pope Benedict.



The Road From Regensburg continued

The Fr Lawrence Murphy Case

The Accusation as per *The Tablet*

Let us take then a representative instance of the relentless, largely anglophone, media attacks upon the Pope.

It concerns the case of the terrible and tragic abuse, by a Milwaukee priest Lawrence Murphy of many 14-15 year old deaf boys (and at least one 12 year old) over many years whilst they were away from the protection of their parents. This was recently brought up by *The New York Times*, without checking its facts with numerous of the key players. In this regard and concerning the role of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) it is quite similar to the other US case brought against the Pope in early April, concerning Fr Kiesle, which was “broken” by *Associated Press*.

In an action that seems very ahead of its time for any institution, the case was reported to the civil authorities in 1973 though these did not bring it to court. It was referred to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) in 1996, not because of the *paedophilia* involved which was not the CDF’s responsibility but because of its role in overseeing the legality of processes involving abuse of the confessional seal and laicisation.

Margaret Kennedy in *The Tablet* neatly recapitulates the seemingly coordinated media barrage in stating that “Pope Benedict [...] as Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, allowed Murphy to remain a priest towards the end of his life”. [“Voice to the Victims”, April 3rd]. After chronicling what certainly sound like some deeply disturbing cases of the mishandling of abuse of disabled children in Catholic schools, she asserts that “in all cases, there is evidence that senior religious figures made efforts to silence deaf and disabled people. The evidence appears to reveal that this reached into the heart of the Vatican.” *The Tablet* piece then goes on to make some radical suggestions about reforming the institutional structures of the Church.

Now at this point we should cut Ms Kennedy some slack. She is founder of “Minister and Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors” and appears to have done some much needed advocacy for

victims of truly terrible crimes. She is at the hard edge of this whole crisis and is giving “voice” to some terrible anguish. As we have said there is no doubt that the Church owes it to the victims and the wider world to try to foster some careful self-examination, restitution and renewal. Surely though all can agree that to do this fruitfully we need to get at the objective facts. And the supposed fact concerning the Pope at the heart of the Vatican, upon which *The Tablet*’s “Voice to the Victims” radical recommendations are based, is manifestly not true.

The Falsehood

As shown by the *New York Times*’ own evidence, published for all to see on their website at the beginning of their well planned assault this Easter, the claim concerning what the “Pope [...] allowed” is false on two counts:

1 The alleged evidence of mishandling concerns words of Archbishop Bertone, Ratzinger’s “deputy” at the CDF, *not Ratzinger himself*.

2 The CDF was not asked, required or empowered to make the decisions it is alleged to have done in this case, but just to advise on due process. Bertone’s advice explicitly followed what was necessary *in order to achieve* dismissal from the clerical state which is never an automatic penalty. Canon 1341 states that a Bishop:

“is to take care to initiate a judicial or administrative process to impose or declare penalties only after he has ascertained that fraternal correction or rebuke or other means of pastoral solicitude cannot sufficiently repair the scandal, restore justice, reform the offender.”

Certainly ecclesiastical precedent places a greater emphasis upon the latter considerations when the accused is close to death, as Fr Murphy was known to be. In addition Pope John Paul did require the CDF to be much more cautious that his predecessor in cases of laicisation for the good of the Church and society. But it is interesting that at the key May 1998 meeting Bertone, repeating a point made by his deputy, clearly *affirmed* “dismissal from the clerical state” as a possible end point of the process they were engaged in.

Possible Defences of the Accusation

Factors that have been used to support these two aspects of the much repeated accusation include the following:

1(a) *Surely Ratzinger must have approved the process.* It may be true but there is no evidence for it.

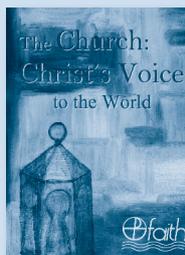
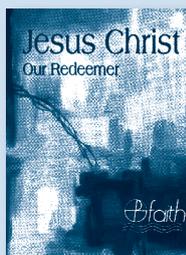
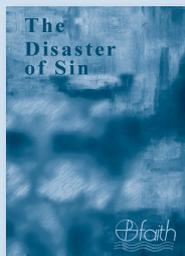
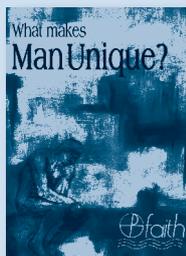
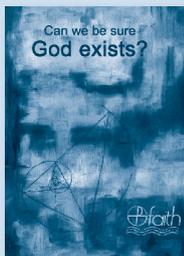
(b) *The buck stopped with Ratzinger.* But that is different from making him the subject of an allegedly seriously mistaken action, which thus reveals profound weakness in the Church’s very constitution. Following corrections on this point even *The Guardian* and *The Times* by early April were acknowledging that and referring to Ratzinger’s “deputy”.

2(a) *The relevant US Bishops argued that it was appropriate to move beyond the preliminary aspects of the process mandated by c. 1341, and had begun trial preparations.* For they had learnt of the deeply felt desire of the Milwaukee deaf community that Fr Murphy lose his clerical state.

Bertone did not order the abating of the diocesan trial but highlighted its legal and practical difficulties. He suggested and “hoped” that other penal and penitential measures might achieve justice, “favour the good of souls and avoid scandal” in an expedited way, especially relevant given Fr Murphy’s precarious health. It was all primarily a question of the interpretation of Church law. As with all law, flouting it might appear to bring fuller justice more quickly, but usually backfires. In any case Bertone’s legal advice clearly did not rule out eventual dismissal. It was very far indeed from being the alleged positive permission for Murphy to remain.

(b) Notes of the May meeting made well after it by Bishop Fliss, of the diocese of Superior, state that the CDF “was not encouraging us to proceed with any formal dismissal on the basis of 24 yrs of apparent good conduct and the precept impeding exercise of orders currently in effect”. This is certainly consistent with Bertone’s legal advice, but is not equivalent to “stopping” the dismissal process, the very action ruled out by Bertone at the meeting.

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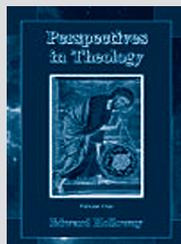
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